

SEEKING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AS A
TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE

by

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B.A, Simon Fraser University, 1991

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

October 2004

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ISBN: 0-494-04655-4

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 0-494-04655-4

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Abstract

This paper presents an ethnographic study of a First Nations-developed program designed to enhance traditional First Nations skills and knowledge. Seven students of the Lil'wat Culture and History program gave their thoughts and feelings about the program in loosely structured interviews, and the resulting data was analyzed and compared to existing First Nations theories, critical theory, and Mezirow's transformational theory. The study found that the medicine wheel model, which incorporates the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects did fit this program. The Lil'wat Culture and History program was also a site of resistance as described in critical theory, and a site of transformational change as outlined by Mezirow. Other changes happened for the students that were important, but not transformational. One main conclusion of the study is that there were transformational changes, and there could have been more if certain changes were made in the program to allow transformational change to occur. The study also outlines the need for a process by which the stakeholders could develop recommendations for future programs.

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LIL'WAT TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

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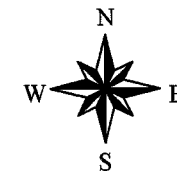
- boundary under revision
- - - Lil'wat Traditional Territory
- Road
- 1,000 metre contour
- - - Glacier

ELEVATIONS

- above 2,500 metres
- 2,000 - 2,499 metres
- 1,500 - 1,999 metres
- 1,000 - 1,499 metres

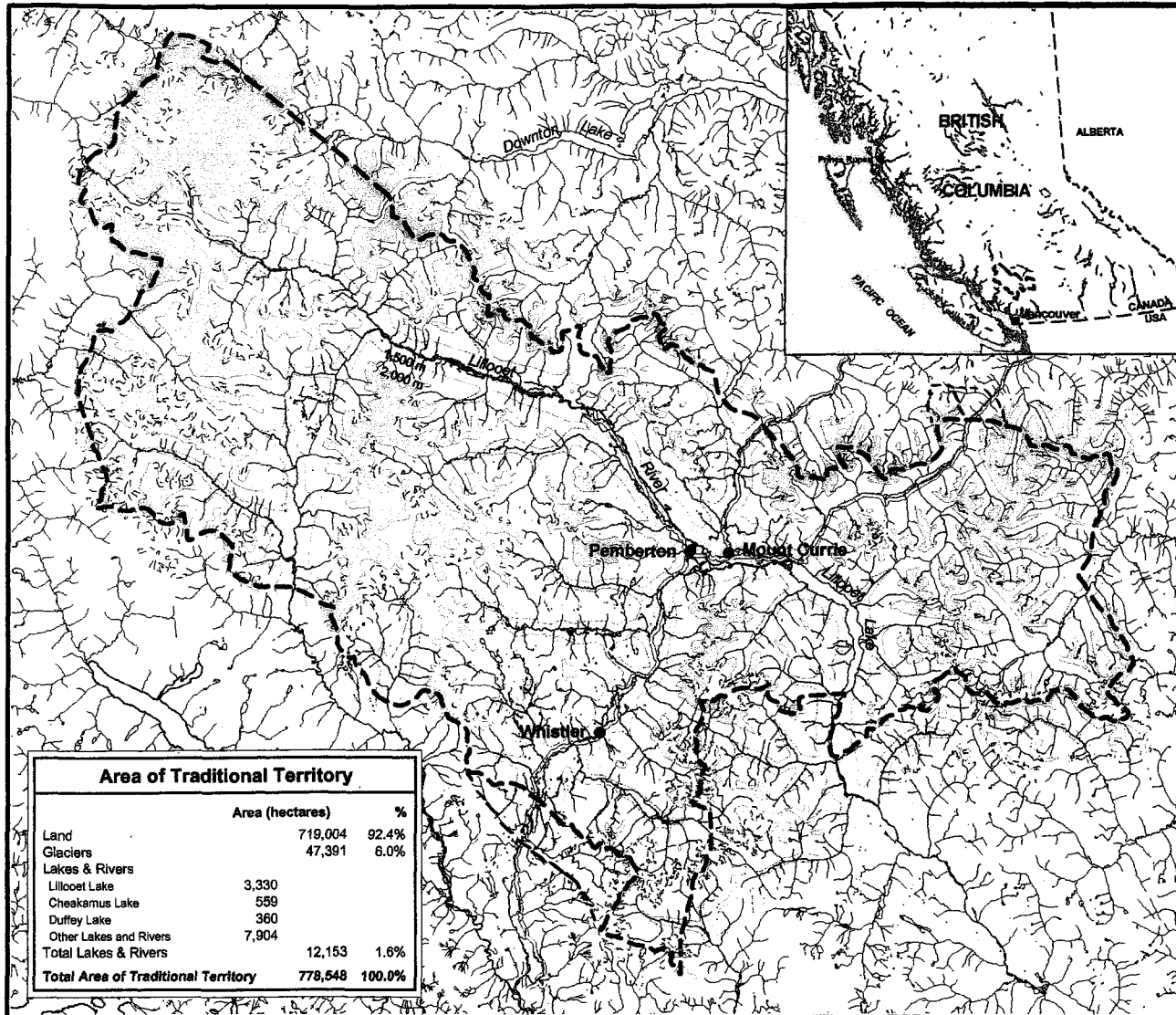
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Scale 1:550,000



June, 2002

Map of Lil'wat Traditional Territory
Figure 1-1



GLOSSARY

Table 2-1

Lil'wat Language Terms	Meaning
Lil'wat	Traditional name of the people of the Mount Currie Band and their language (Pierre 2004)
Stl'atl'imx	Traditional name of the Lillooet people, or the people of the 11 related Bands from Mount Currie to Pavilion in British Columbia who speak one of the two dialects of the Lillooet language (Pierre 2004)
Ts'zil	The name of the mountain behind Ts'zil Learning Centre in Mount Currie (Pierre, 2004)
nwálhcal ti máq7a	the new snow that comes to take the old snow away (Pierre, 2004 and Nelson, 2004)
or	
nwálhnas ti máq7a	“ “ (Williams, 1979)
kukws	to help (Pierre, 2004)
kukwpi7	chief (Pierre, 2004)
tsáatawaoz'	cedar tree (Williams, 1979)
sluwaoz	inner cedar bark (Pierre, 2004)
ákwal'micw	red-cedar roots (Williams, 1979)
tsáqwmaz'	Saskatoon bush
s7istken	traditional pit house (Williams, 1979)
ucwalmicwts	speaking the Lil'wat language (Pierre, 2004)
ts'úqwaoz'	salmon (Williams, 1979)
láwa7	sockeye salmon (Williams, 1979)
t'áqsa7	barbequed salmon (Williams, 1979)
st'ula7	deer (Williams, 1979)
hakwa7	wild rhubarb (Williams, 1979)
xúsum	soapberries (Williams, 1979)
ts'wan	dried fish (Williams, 1979)
máqin	hair (Williams, 1979)
skwakst	hand (Williams, 1979)
nkwt'ústen'	eyes (Williams, 1979)
ao7	No (Pierre, 2004)
cw7aoz kwesu sp'xal	don't be stingy (Pierre, 2004)
sptakwlh	teaching stories (Williams and Wyatt, 1987, p.211)
sququqwel	experience stories (Williams and Wyatt, 1987, p. 211)

Explanation of terms

The terms Indian, Aboriginal, Native, and First Nations are used depending on the work that is being cited or the historical time that is being discussed. The term Indian is

used in works from the 1970's and 1980's such as the Indian Control of Indian Education document of 1972, and in reference to anything previous to 1970. The terms Aboriginal, Native, and First Nations are used interchangeably depending on what work is being discussed. All of these terms are widely used today. If another work is not being cited, I use the term First Nations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Setting

Mount Currie, home of the Lil'wat people, is one of B.C.'s largest First Nations reserves with 1 819 Band members (Leo, October 2004, personal communication). Lil'wat is the traditional name of one of the lower Lillooet (Stl'atl'imx) Bands. There are 11 Bands of the upper and lower Stl'atl'imx Nation whose combined territory encompasses the area drained by the Lillooet, Bridge, and Stein Rivers. This area includes what we know of as Whistler, Pemberton, Lillooet, D'arcy, Pavilion, Bralorne and Skukumchuck in B.C.'s interior, just northwest of Vancouver. Mount Currie's three main reserve areas are located just north of Pemberton along Highway 99, although the traditional territory extends much further (see map 1).

Mount Currie has a long history of involvement in innovative educational programs. These include a community school that has been run by the all-Native Mount Currie Education Advisory Board since 1973, and one of the first on-reserve teacher education programs from 1975 to 1981 (Williams and Wyatt, 1987).

I first worked in the community of Mount Currie in September of 1996. As an adult basic education (ABE) instructor for Capilano College, I was hired to teach basic English and math to a small class of adults in the Mount Currie Foundations Program, operated out of one room in an old school building. Over the next seven years, thanks to a forward thinking, hard-working education coordinator and Band council, the program grew each year. Business courses and computers were added first, then the program moved to a new building and expanded to include a teachers' education program and

university transfer courses, a fully equipped computer lab, extensive business courses (up to third year college level), and a college reading and study program that includes an area where students can do physical exercises to enhance their learning. With a new name, Ts'zil Learning Centre, and a ten room complex of attached portables, the Centre became home to most of the post secondary programs in Mount Currie. There are now three full-time Capilano College staff, a Dean who is a Band member and also teaches for Simon Fraser University (SFU), a secretary, and various traveling instructors from Capilano College and SFU. The community vision is to expand and convert this program into a fully accredited First Nations college within ten years (Leo, 2004).

In February, 2003, a new program, the Lil'wat Cultural and History program, started and took over the room just down the hall from my adult basic education (ABE) classroom. This was a very different program from all of the others in the centre because the focus was not on the knowledge that you need to be successful in the dominant society, but on learning and sharing Lil'wat traditional knowledge. The participants were all Band members, and many of them had been unemployed or underemployed at the time the program started. I knew some of the participants slightly from attending community events, or interviewing them for ABE classes, but over the next few months, I began to see changes in how some of the students presented themselves, how they spoke with others, how they participated in community activities, and even in how often they smiled. They always seemed to be busy with cultural projects or involved in community activities. I couldn't determine exactly what was happening for them, but it seemed that something was changing besides their knowledge and involvement with the community. After discussions with members of the Mount Currie Band, I realized that what was

happening in the program could have important implications for further programming. Personally, I wanted to describe the program in depth and understand what was happening for the students. I wanted to know, among other things, whether the participants were undergoing transformational learning.

Development of the Lil'wat Culture and History Program

The staff of the Lil'wat Employment Centre, which is run by the Mount Currie Band, had been working for ten years to provide training programs, life skills, help with resumes, and whatever else the people of the Mount Currie Band who were on social assistance required to make the transition from social assistance to employment. As Christine Leo, the Director of Community Advancement Programs for the Lil'wat nation explained in an interview in 2004, the Lil'wat Employment Centre had been quite successful and many Band members were now meaningfully employed. There was, however, one group of people who did not come forward to take advantage of any of the programs, and remained on social assistance. Leo and her staff shifted their thinking from offering typical employment helps and incentives that encourage people to work towards employment in mainstream society, to looking at ways to work with the strengths that these people had and increasing those strengths. Many of the non-participating people had traditional Lil'wat skills and knowledge such as knowing the language, working with cedar bark, gathering and preserving food and medicines, and knowing the stories and songs, etc. A decision was made to offer a program that would use the skills these people had, allow them to share these skills with others, and provide a vehicle for them to work with the elders to share and to learn more skills. In November, 2002, the Lil'wat Employment Centre staff called a meeting with the people who had not

participated in employment programs and the elders. Over sixty people attended. As is traditional in this area, the people who gathered were fed, and then they shared important information. Leo and her staff explained to the people that the Lil'wat Employment Centre would be starting a program with the focus of learning traditional skills and participating in community events. The participants would be involved in planning the program and deciding which skills they wanted to learn. The elders were very excited that this program was going to happen. Twelve of the people who had never participated in employment programs signed up immediately, and over the next few weeks, fourteen more added their names to the list (Leo 2004).

The Lil'wat Culture and History program began in March, 2003. A classroom was set aside for the program at the Mount Currie post-secondary facility, Ts'zil Learning Centre. The first challenge was to tackle some of the personal issues of the group members and to give them the skills to work together as a group. This was addressed through a five-week life skills course and individual counseling. Life skills is an accepted title for a program that helps people understand themselves and their needs through topics such as goal setting, time management, personal relationships, etc. The life skills class was in the morning, and the afternoons were used for individual counseling, and for planning the rest of the program. A large part of the planning was for the students to assess what traditional skills they already had and what they needed to learn. Then, in conjunction with Leo and her staff, the students made the decision to focus on four main areas of traditional learning: Lil'wat language, gathering and preserving food, gathering and working with cedar bark and roots, and building a traditional pit house. The students shared what they knew with each other, and asked for help from others in the community

to learn what they didn't know. If they needed traditional materials, the students had to learn how to gather them in the wild. There was no instructor for this part of the program. The group decided what they wanted to learn and how they would learn it, then approached Leo with their plan for a specific project and had it approved. During this time, the students were given a wage and encouraged to think of the program as a job, attend every weekday from 9 to 4, and work at learning new skills. The classroom was full of a variety of projects in various stages of completion, and boxes and piles of traditional materials. Bigger or messier projects were done outside around a fire. The students spent at least one day a month with the elders and helped with the preparations for these elders' days, including cooking, cleaning, and preparing gifts for the elders. When events in the community required people to help out, this group was expected to participate because the traditional values of the Lil'wat people promote helping others and the community. Some examples of what the group has been involved in are graveyard cleaning, assistance during and after the great Pemberton Valley flood in October 2003 (sandbagging, helping out at the evacuation centers, and cleanup), helping at funeral gatherings, teaching drum-making to young people, and drumming and singing at community events. The program was in existence from March 2003 to May 2004 (Leo

history of First Nations education, some of the history of education in Mount Currie, and concepts of traditional knowledge. The study analyzes what was learned and how it was learned, and examines changes in the participants as a result of their participation.

Various theories of education are presented during the analysis to see if any paradigm can be used to illustrate the Lil'wat Culture and History Program. The study also takes suggestions from the participants to recommend changes to the next program. To some extent, the study also documents the lives of the participants, because their stories connect to the theories discussed.

Purpose of the Research

When I came to choose my research topic, I decided that it was important to investigate what was happening in the Lil'wat Culture and History program, what appeared to be working according to the students, and why it was working. I also wondered what changes had occurred personally for the participants, and if the changes transferred to others areas of their lives. For years as an adult educator, I have been interested in the non-academic outcomes of participation in educational programs, or what I see as the 'magic' of education, the things that we don't specifically teach, but that create positive change in the self-image of students and, often, in their lives. Now I had the opportunity to investigate these phenomena in a unique First Nations program.

When I approached the Mount Currie Band Council to ask for permission to do this research, council members pointed out some practical benefits they could see in such a study. Some of the members stated that my research would be useful to them as the basis for their required report on the Lil'wat Culture and History program after its completion. As well, the Mount Currie Band has access to special training funds due to

the 2010 Olympics in Whistler. Because the Olympics are being held partly in Mount Currie territory and partly in Squamish territory, these Bands are receiving training dollars to equip their members for employment in building construction, road improvements, tourism and hospitality ventures, and information technology required to support the Olympics. Therefore, it is potentially important for the Lil'wat Nation to know what has worked in the Culture and History program, as well as what didn't. This information may assist the Band in developing effective programs to train Band members to participate in the Olympic building boom and also to showcase and share their culture with the world during the 2010 Olympics.

There is another use for my research in the community. The Mount Currie teachers' education cohort, who are in their third year of studies, are just beginning to take Native Studies courses and will be learning to do research. My thesis and my process of doing research in the community will be shared with these students.

Position of the Researcher

As is common in qualitative studies in First Nations or feminist research, I need to position myself in the writing with regards to the research because my position and my view of life affect the research (Kirby and McKenna, 1989 and Haig-Brown, 1995). As Michael Apple states in the preface to Haig-Brown's study of the Native Education Centre,

Celia Haig-Brown is conscious of the need for reflexivity. What is her role in this story? How is she positioned in the relations of power that construct both the story and the social conditions of the telling of that story. The fact that she takes these questions so seriously makes this book even more thoughtful (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. x).

I, too, take these questions very seriously. It is with trepidation that I embark on a journey of discovery that by rights should be done by a researcher of First Nations ancestry. I am a person of European descent, Scottish and English, with a working class background. I am an outsider, but I have been living in my own personal informal ethnography for over thirty years. I gained Indian status through marriage when I was nineteen. As a wife and mother, and later, as an educator, I have been a part of several First Nations communities. My life, my education, and my work have brought me into contact with First Nations people from all across Canada and the U.S. I have witnessed first-hand both the tragedy that colonization and the residential schools have created, and the determination and satisfaction that occur when individuals and communities regain their power and their traditions. I have been part of the Mount Currie community for almost 9 years, and I participate in a variety of community events and ceremonies.

I can only present what I have learned through this research or experienced throughout my life with respect, and support it with what I have read and what I have discussed with other educators, both First Nations, and non-First Nations. I hope that what I write doesn't offend anyone, and that it adds to the much needed body of knowledge that is being gathered by First Nations and non-First Nations researchers and educators to aid in the development of educational theories and programs that are effective for First Nations students and communities.

CHAPTER TWO

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION IN CANADA

Introduction

The failure of non-Native education of Natives can be read as the success of Native resistance to political, spiritual, and psychological genocide. (Hampton, 1995, p.7)

The legacy of colonization and assimilationist education is present in the lives of the participants in the Lil'wat Culture and History Program. The students in the program are enmeshed in the history and development of First Nations education. One student attended residential school, and others had parents who attended residential schools, and they are all dealing with the effects of residential school in their lives. Some attended the first Native controlled schools, and others went to non-Native schools, with varying degrees of educational success. Therefore, it is important to this study to look at the history of First Nations education, and how the dominant system is implicated in the oppression and attempted assimilation of First Nations in Canada. The traditional knowledge of First Nations peoples was devalued and discouraged throughout the educational system, and the Western knowledge and world view of the dominant society took precedence.

Pre-Contact

Prior to contact, First Nations education was informal and was conducted within the family and the community and within a spiritual worldview. The people were taught the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that were necessary to survive and to live in harmony with the community and the natural world (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1987). By watching and becoming involved in daily activities, ceremonies, rituals, and by listening

to the oral histories and stories, the young would learn their responsibilities, gain skills and knowledge, and internalize the values and beliefs of their culture. As a specific example, Lorna Williams and June Wyatt describe traditional Lil'wat education as being lifelong and a part of life that was intricately connected to family, community, and environment:

Children learned first by trial and error while being observed quietly by adults; later, children learned by observing adults attentively and practicing privately. From the stories told in the evening by elders, children learned their history, science, spiritual beliefs, and customs. The culture of the Lil'wat was transmitted orally to each generation through sptakwlh (teaching stories) and sququqwel (experience stories).

(Williams and Wyatt, 1987, p. 211)

Battiste, in "Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation" (1987), explains the traditional complex literacy system which involves symbols, and a way of 'writing' history using beads that still exists in Algonkian-speaking tribes such as the Micmac. The traditional responsibility of elders to transmit teachings gently to children, and to be models of what they are teaching is discussed in Ermine's essay "Pedagogy from the ethos" (1998), where he examines an interview with his "second mother" or aunt of the Cree people of Sturgeon Lake for sources of Aboriginal pedagogy.

First Nations in Canada have traditional knowledge and traditional ways of teaching that have been passed down through the generations and exist today in spite of attempts to replace them with Eurocentric knowledge and ways.

Early Contact

Contact with Europeans began to change the methods of educating First Nations people, and the push for assimilation often drove the traditional ways below the surface and replaced them with the Eurocentric view of education (Richardson and Blanchet-

Cohen, 2000 and Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1987). For those First Nations with first contact with Europeans, this change began very early as the newcomers had no respect for the traditional ways. Jaenen describes the efforts to educate and civilize the original inhabitants of New France in the 1600's:

A primary objective of French civil and religious contact with the Native peoples of North America was to incorporate them into New France and to convert and civilize them, concepts which again were founded on the conviction that they were without any religion, or pagans, or even devil worshippers, and on the conviction that they were brute savages, or barbarians. (Jaenen, 1986, p. 45)

As this passage illustrates, even as early as the 17th century in Canada, no value or respect was given to the traditional knowledge and way of life of the Native people. This attitude that the Native people and their ways were inferior continued through the centuries and culminated in the assimilationist residential schools in the late 1800's. As the residential schools were coming into prominence, one school in British Columbia opened with the attitude that Indians and non-Indians should receive the same education. Jean Barman (1995b) outlines the changes in federal government policy and how that affected the education of Indian girls at All Hallows School at Yale in British Columbia from 1884 to 1920. Originally set up by the Anglican church as a day school for Indian girls, All Hallows became a boarding school to improve attendance, then started taking non-Indian paying girls from good families around B.C. to augment the poor funding for the Indian school. In the beginning, Indians and non-Indians participated in the same classes and activities, and showed the same learning abilities. By 1890, parents of the non-Indian girls, and others who belonged to the dominant society in B.C. began to complain about the mingling of the two races, and the physical separation started. For

some time, the academic equality continued, students of both races excelled in academics and arts, but the society at large voiced concern about Indians entering the work force and competing with Whites. Clifford Sifton, the federal minister responsible for Indians, could not accept that Indians could be equal, and demanded that they be educated only to fit back into their appointed place in the reserves. From that point on, the Indian girls at All Hallows were basically servants in the school and received very little in the way of education. The Indian section of the school closed in 1918 (Barman, 1995b). The philosophy of equality and academic encouragement that All Hallows put into practice for a short time when it first began operating stands in contrast to the philosophy of the many Indian residential schools that the people from Mount Currie and other reserves across Canada attended.

Residential Schools

As Wilson (1986) points out in " 'No Blanket to be Worn in School' The Education of Indians in Nineteenth Century Ontario", the attitude of civilizing or Christianizing the Indians continued into the 1800's with voluntary day schools or industrial schools run mostly by churches. According to the Residential Schools chapter of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) (1996), the greatest change came after the Constitution Act of 1867 gave the Canadian government responsibility for Indians and Indian land, and the government then adopted a policy of assimilation. The government commissioned, then accepted, the Davin report in 1879, which championed the separate American-style boarding schools which were predicated on the belief that for assimilation to succeed, you had to remove the children from the cultural influences of the parents and the community (Barman1995a). There was a

deliberate and planned effort to separate Indian children from anything Indian, and to teach them that “the world was a European place, with which only European values had meaning” (RCAP 1.1). The RCAP report (1996) describes the vision of how the residential school would meet the target of assimilation in three ways; first by disrupting family and community life by removing the children, secondly, by using a Eurocentric curriculum and devaluing Indian knowledge and culture, and thirdly, by placing graduates in a non-Native environment. This report also follows the government neglect of residential schools, and the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse that the students endured. The children of Mount Currie were sent to Catholic residential schools in Mission, Kamloops, and Williams Lake. Some saw or suffered abuse at the schools. One student from Mount Currie who attended residential school in both Kamloops and Williams Lake describes the sick feeling she had when she saw children being taken out of the dorms quietly in the middle of the night, and she knew what was going on (possibly sexual abuse) wasn’t right (Nelson, 2004).

Haig-Brown, in Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School (1989), documents life at the Kamloops Indian Residential School through the eyes of thirteen students whose attendance spanned many years of the school’s existence . Haig-Brown describes daily life at the school and the feelings of the students about being there. She documents some of the oppressing physical conditions which sometimes left the students cold and hungry, and the school’s attempts to destroy the Native language and culture, and instill in the students a feeling of inferiority. The most important aspect of traditional knowledge, the language, seemed to be targeted for elimination:

The elimination of language has always been a primary stage in a process of cultural genocide. This was the primary function of

the residential school. My father, who attended Alberni Indian Residential School for four years in the twenties, was physically tortured by his teachers for speaking Tseshaht: they pushed sewing needles through his tongue, a routine punishment for language offenders (Randy Fred in Haig-Brown, 1989).

Haig-Brown also finds resistance to this method of colonization in many of the stories, including an underground network to steal and distribute food, in part because the students were starving and in part to rebel against what was happening to them. A student from Mount Currie was a part of the underground network while she was in Kamloops. When she first arrived at the school, she was told that she would be working in the kitchen. The other students told her to wear something with big pockets, so she could take the leftovers from the meals of the priests and nuns and share these with the other students because they were always hungry (Nelson, 2004). The students also spoke their language whenever they were out of earshot of the authorities, and resisted in many other ways, including personal ones such as becoming numb or defiant.

And the one thing I remembered when she used to strap me...I knew I was going to get five or ten straps on each hand and I knew it was going to draw blood-but I would remind myself, 'It's not going to hurt. Just so I can make you angry, I'm not going to let you know it hurts...' and I would just stare at her in the face...and I wouldn't even let a drop, a tear come down. God, that used to make her mad (Sophie, in Haig-Brown, 1989).

First Nations children from Mount Currie, and from most other Native reserves, were removed from their communities and placed in residential schools, thereby removing them from their family and community, language, culture and traditional ways, but they were not taught how to be successful in non-Native society. In residential schools, First Nations students were exposed to a watered down version of what, in western thought, is education because these schools received less funding than the non-

Native schools, Native students spent only a small part of each day studying the curriculum, and the teachers were often under-skilled volunteers or missionaries. These students were prevented from acquiring the traditional skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to take their rightful place in their own societies, and they were not given what was required to take a meaningful place in the dominant society. They were educated for assimilation, but only at the lowest level of society as domestic workers and labourers (Barman, 1995a). The effects of removing children from their families and communities, and subjecting them, not only to inferior education, but often to physical and sexual abuse, are well recognized and have had and are still having devastating consequences for individuals, communities, and nations today.

Subjugation has taken its toll on our cultures. Indigenous peoples have the highest rates of impoverishment, incarceration, suicide and alcoholism in Canada. Much of this can be traced back to the abuse received at the residential schools (Jaine quoted in Barman, 1995a, p.57)

Witness the countless court actions for physical and sexual abuse, the apologies by the churches and the implementation of large infrastructures to cope with healing, such as the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. In Mount Currie, a support group aptly called TEARS helps some residential school survivors cope with their memories and the affects of residential school on their lives.

Other Factors Undermining First Nations Society

It is important to note that in spite of the overwhelming impact that taking the First Nations children away and educating them for assimilation had, it was only one piece in the puzzle of the negative factors affecting First Nations families, communities, and culture that was occurring during the late 1800's and the 1900's. First Nations were trying to survive the imposition of control over every aspect of their lives through the

Indian Act, which among other things destroyed traditional government structures and imposed a system of elected chiefs and councils. As well, the reserve system and relocation of First Nations communities limited and sometimes destroyed the First Nations connections to traditional lands. The introduction of European diseases such as smallpox decimated some First Nations populations. The outlawing of ceremonies such as the potlatch, sundance and winter dancing which were the fabric of First Nations social, spiritual, and sometimes economic life and an important vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge to the next generation had devastating consequences. According to Drake-Terry (1989), the Lil'wat, as one of the 11 Lillooet Tribes, were involved in an on-going battle to protect their traditional territories, and even their designated reserve lands, from encroachment by white settlers, hydro dams, and the railway. The Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe, which outlines the Lillooet position regarding their land, was written in 1911 and signed by seventeen chiefs, including James Stager of the Pemberton Band, which later became the Mount Currie Band or Lil'wat Nation. This declaration was sent to Ottawa and subsequently ignored. The position is very clear:

We claim that we are the rightful owners of our tribal territory and everything pertaining thereto. We have always lived in our country; at no time have we ever deserted it, or left it to others. We have retained it from invasion by other tribes at the cost of our blood. Our ancestors were in possession of our country centuries before the whites came... We are aware the B.C. government claims our country, like all other Indian territories in B.C.; but we deny their right to it. We never gave it or sold it to them (Drake-Terry, 1989, p. 268).

The Lillooet Tribe has continued to fight land encroachment with many setbacks and small successes, first through the Alliance of Interior Tribes and then through the

other organizations such as the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, up to the present day (Drake-Terry 1989).

If fighting for a meaningful, effective system of education were the only fight First Nations were involved in the late 1800's and early 1900's, the outcome may have been different. First Nations in Canada were, and, in some cases still are, in a constant battle on many fronts to protect their culture and their very existence.

The Struggle for Control

In education, the fight has been long and strenuous. Residential schools existed and did their damage for over one hundred years. The first residential schools appeared in Canada shortly before 1879, and the last ones closed in the mid-1980's (RCAP, 1996)). Although First Nations parents and community leaders argued for a more satisfactory way to educate their children from as early as 1916, meaningful change took a long time to come. The anger of First Nations people toward the kind of education that had been forced on them, and the commitment of these same people to work toward a meaningful way of educating is evident in this speech by Clive Linklater (1980), a First Nations education consultant:

Education is a war. The educational system imposed on us is a form of warfare. It was designed to destroy. The education system was designed to destroy our language, our religious practices, our spiritual beliefs, our families, our political and economic system, our land, and our very existence as a people. A true education system will enhance, rather than destroy all these basic, fundamental verities of our existence. (pp. 46-50)

Real change did not come about until after the Indian Control of Indian Education document of the National Indian Brotherhood was presented to and accepted by the Canadian government in 1973 (Battiste, 1995)(RCAP, Chapter 10)(Haig-Brown, 1995).

The Indian Control of Indian Education document recognizes the following as principles that should underlie First Nations education in Canada: local control to allow for the diversity of cultures, parental and community involvement in education, and education to encourage the values of self-reliance, living in harmony and respect with nature, respect for personal freedom, generosity, and wisdom. The goals for First Nations education outlined in the same document are to reinforce Indian identity, and to provide the training necessary to make a good living in modern society ((Barman, Hebert, McCaskill, 1987). Since 1973, First Nations, including Mount Currie, have been gaining various levels of control over some aspects of their children's education (Haig-Brown, 1995).

As the residential schools began to close in the 1950's, a small day school opened in Mount Currie, run by Catholic nuns. In the late 1960's, the children were moved to nearby Pemberton, three grades per year starting with primary. Some parents had negative experiences with their children at this school and wanted other options. For example, two young Mount Currie boys about 7 years old were kicked out of school and made to walk home about 8 kilometers on the railroad track. The parents were not notified that the boys had left the school. The two boys arrived home safely, but the parents would no longer send them to school in Pemberton. Around this time, George Manuel, one of the leaders of the Native Brotherhood, came to Mount Currie and talked to the people about taking control of their own education. The mothers of the two boys who had to walk home were among the first organizers of a Mount Currie run school (Nelson, 2004). There were many challenges because the nuns, the school district, and the Department of Indian Affairs did not want Mount Currie opening its own school. The

Mount Currie Education Advisory Board, made up of Mount Currie Band members (mostly parents), was formed to oversee the development and operation of the school. The school, one of the first Band run schools to open in B.C., operated for the first two years (1972 and 1973) on donations and volunteers as there was no government funding. The school was unique because it ran twelve months of the year and incorporated outdoor activities, Lil'wat language and culture, and agriculture into the curriculum (Nelson, 2004).

As part of the process of taking control of their own education, the Mount Currie Education Advisory Board partnered with Simon Fraser University to run a teacher training program in the community so that the children of Mount Currie would be taught by their own people. The Mount Currie Teacher Training program ran from July 1975 to 1981 and trained twenty-two Band members as teachers, all of whom worked at some point in the Band school (Williams and Wyatt, 1987).

The Band school has seen many changes since the 1970's, including going back to the 10 month school year and dropping the agricultural component, but it still exists as Xit'olacw Community School, and is run by a board made up of Mount Currie Band members. Some of the teachers who went through the original Mount Currie Teacher Training program are still there today. Lil'wat language and culture are still valued parts of the curriculum, but not as much as when the school first started (Nelson, 2004).

First Nations World View and Education

The process of First Nations control of education has been slow and contradictory. At first, just controlling the funding, the school buildings, the hiring, and having the opportunity to infuse some aspects of First Nations culture into the curriculum

seemed to be the goals. Over time, First Nations educators, researchers, students, administrators, and others in First Nations communities realized that the change had to go much deeper than that (Battiste, 1995). The type of education forced upon First Nations students and the fragmentary, scientific world view that it expressed and legitimized were at odds with the First Nations world view of the connectedness of all things. Rupert Ross (1992), in his book Dancing with a ghost: Exploring Indian reality, examines the clash of the two world views and how this clash affects everyday life today, particularly in his area of expertise, the justice system. He describes the First Nations world view as holistic, and concerned with individual and collective understandings of Kitchi-Manitou, the Great Mystery. As early as 1805, this difference in world view was recognized by First Nations people. A missionary in the Six Nations area was pleading for en masse conversions to Christianity, but one of the First Nations orators responded by saying “Kitchi-Manitou has given us a different understanding” (p.vii). In effective First Nations education, what is taught and how it is taught has to be compatible with First Nations world views and cultural practices.

The Lil’wat people believe that there is a great creator and that everything in creation is related to each other. The trees, rock, rivers, animals, birds etc. are your relatives and they have spirits of their own, so you treat them with respect. When something is taken from its rightful place, for example, cedar roots, deer, or fish, there are rituals to follow to show respect and thank that plant or animal for giving itself to you. Even the processes of nature are given human aspects, for example, there is a last snow of the season that comes every year, and the Lil’wat people say that there is something different about this snow. The name of this snow, *nwálhcal ti máq7a*, means ‘the new

snow that comes to meet the old snow and take it away'. In the Lil'wat view of the world, your relatives, the animal and birds can act as guardian spirits if they come to a person during puberty rites or fasts. Pictographs in the Lil'wat area were drawn to show which animal had given the fasting person the honour of being his or her guardian spirit (Pierre, 2004).

The Lil'wat people believe that lost human spirits who have not yet found their way to the spirit world are still around us and we must respect and be careful of them. There are rules to follow with respect to these spirits such as close your blinds when it gets dark, bring your washing in from the line and bring in any toys that the children have outside before dark, and never eat in the dark or the spirits eat with you. Pierre tells of a recent story where a young child left her little toy chair outside overnight, and from that time on, the child seemed to be fighting with someone for her chair. She often says "She won't let me have it!", but she is too young to explain who 'she' is. A spirit may have taken possession of the chair during the night (Pierre, 2004).

Many events and teachings are told in story form. These stories, as well as songs and names, are passed down through the generations and when you sing a song or tell a story, it is proper to tell the history of it first to explain how you have permission to use it.

The four directions are important in Lil'wat culture and each direction has different gifts, but east, where the sun rises, and west, where the sun sets, have special significance. For example, in death, you must have your head towards the west (Pierre, 2004).

Lil'wat elders are treasured members of the community. They are the teachers, the herbalists, and the ones who make sure that things are done 'in the right way'. The elders are often involved in meetings where decisions are made about the community. For example, the elders were at the first meeting held to explain the Lil'wat Culture and History Program and their input was valued.

One aspect of Lil'wat world view is evident in the way the Lil'wat students I have taught over the years talk about their plans and lives: community good before the individual acquisition. The most respected people are those who dedicate their lives to helping the community, not those who acquire position and money for themselves. This aspect also emerged in the way some of the students in the Lil'wat Culture and History Program and the community people I interviewed speak about their work and live their lives. When something is done, it is done 'for the people' or 'for my community'. When students decided to get further education, the reason given most often is "I want to help the people." This aspect of First Nations culture is documented extensively in the field of cross-cultural education, for example, in Brislin (1993). Each of the community leaders I interviewed for this paper voiced similar sentiments when describing actions they had taken and why. For example, Nelson (2004), when explaining about the beginnings of the Band run school, stated "We (the parents) did it to help the people." The Lil'wat word 'kukws' means to help someone out and even the word for chief, kukwpi7, has 'help' as its root, meaning that a chief helps the people (Pierre, 2004). This communal way of thinking is an important aspect of Lil'wat world view and governs the way many people plan and live their lives.

Many of the aspects of Lil'wat worldview I have described are accepted as common to many of the world's indigenous peoples: the connectedness of all things and that everything has a spirit, a communal rather than individual focus, a desire to respectfully coexist with or take care of rather than conquer nature, a respect for the wisdom of elders, a belief in a creator and that spirituality is part of who you are and how you think and live every day, and a holistic view of persons including the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual aspects. (Haig-Brown, 1995 and Battiste, 2000). The prairie symbol of the medicine wheel or the circle is widely used to model the balance and connectedness that form the basis for Indigenous world views (Archibald, October 2004).

The Present

According to the 2001 Canadian census, high school completion rates for First Nations students are still low compared to non-First Nations. For non-First Nations students, the high school completion rate is 79%, while for First Nations it is 42% (Archibald, 2004 workshop). Educators and researchers, both First Nations and non-First Nations are working hard to change these figures. Today, many First Nations programs, particularly in the field of education, social services, justice, and more recently science and medicine, are based on the widely accepted First Nations holistic view that takes into consideration not only all aspects of the individual's growth and development-physical, mental, spiritual and emotional, but also the individual's relationship with the community, the nation and the environment. This is often illustrated by the model of the medicine wheel. The underlying world view is that everything is connected throughout the human society and the natural world, so for balance and harmony to be achieved, all

things have to be considered. The quest to develop effective programs has changed from infusing First Nations culture and history into existing programs and curricula, to a much deeper and more extensive process as First Nations scholars and educators re work and create “paradigms, models, and processes of education....with Aboriginal values and philosophy as the central design principle” (Castellano, Davis and Lahache, 2000c, p. 253). Castellano et al. see the 1990’s as a kind of turning point in the struggle for Native control of Native education where the focus became analyzing what was “ ‘Aboriginal’ about Aboriginal education” and encouraging Aboriginally centered educational research (Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000b, p. 97). Native scholars and educators are working to analyze sites of oppression and renewal, and to transform the theories of the dominant society so that they will

not only include and properly value Indigenous knowledge, thought and heritage in all levels of education, curriculum, and professional practice but also develop a cooperative and dignified strategy that will invigorate and animate Indigenous languages, cultures, knowledge, and vision in academic structures (Battiste, 2000, p.xxi).

Groups such as the Lil’wat Culture and History students are a vital part of preserving cultural knowledge. Studies of this group can bring cultural knowledge to the forefront so that these theoretical changes can take place.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Research

There has been a great deal of academic work done in the field of First Nations education in recent years by both First Nations and non-First Nations educators and researchers. However, groups such as the Lil'wat Culture and History group, where their reason for existence is to learn traditional ways and pass them on, are very rare, and therefore, so is the research about them.

In most of the existing studies that include traditional teachings, the programs incorporate traditional teachings into a mainstream educational program, whether it be at the grade school level or in higher education. Haig-Brown has conducted two such studies, one of a First Nations controlled adult education centre in Vancouver (1995) and another of a culturally based high school in Saskatoon First-Nations (1997). Both of these studies looked at education from the perspective of the student, and used open ended questions as one type of data collection as this study does. The first study is an ethnography that describes the Native Education Centre in Vancouver which offers a variety of programs, from upgrading (Native adult basic education) and college prep (such as the Native Science and Health Careers Preparation program), to Native Hospitality and Tourism Management and Native Early Childhood Education. Each program and course incorporates Native content, and there are classes in beading, drumming and dancing, and other Native skills. This is an urban centre with students from many different Native nations, but in spite of the difficulty this presents, the board

and the staff are committed to valuing a wide variety of culture and traditional knowledge.

The object of Haig-Brown's (1997) second study is Joe Duquette High School in Plains Cree territory. This school uses the concept of the sacred circle to move the students through spirituality, cultural activities, and culturally relevant ways of teaching, towards health and wholeness while they learn the provincial curriculum. Students regularly participate in rituals such as the sweetgrass and pipe ceremonies, and learn skills such as drumming and dancing, and Cree language, along with their mainstream language arts and math. Haig-Brown et al (1997) use the voices of the students and of the parent committee to illustrate the success of the school

The Nisga'a people of Northern British Columbia have a philosophy that sees education as "a total way of life" (McKay and McKay, 1987 p. 64). Alvin and Bert McKay and Michiyo K. Okuma (1996), have studied how this philosophy manifests itself in the Nisga'a controlled schools at every level from grade school to post secondary. Every level values traditional language and culture. These studies also use interviews as an important source of data collection and look at the programs from the students' perspectives as this one does.

St. Pierre (1998) conducted a naturalistic case study of students' perceptions of their educational experiences at Little Big Horn College on the Crow reservation in Montana. He used open-ended interview questions and valued the students' perspectives in much the same manner as my study. Big Horn College incorporates language and culture into its programs.

Other researchers looked at specific curriculum subjects and showed how traditional values and cultural knowledge can form the basis of a new way of looking at mainstream subjects and a new way of teaching. As an example, Gregory Cajete (1999) presented an integrated way to teach science based on the First Nations view of the connectedness of all things, bringing in other disciplines such as philosophy and art, and using the traditional knowledge of the heavens, plant and animal life, etc.

This study of the Lil'wat Culture and History program would fill a presently sparsely occupied space in the knowledge base for First Nations education because the goal of the program is to gain traditional knowledge and be able to share it. It is not enmeshed with, or supplemental to any mainstream program.

The First Nations educators and researchers mentioned so far used qualitative methods of inquiry, particularly those which involve the participants in the reflection process of the research. These methods stand in opposition to the objective, positivistic methods that have been imposed on First Nations people and communities in the past. These past methods have caused First Nations to distrust both research in general and academics. Graham Hingangaroa Smith (2000) justifies Indigenous people's distrust of academics, research and institutions because of a "history of hurt, humiliation and exploitation" (p. 213). Smith also stresses the need to accept outside theories only if they have "emancipatory relevance to our Indigenous struggle" (p.214). He urges Indigenous peoples to develop new theories that emerge from the language and the culture. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2002) covers many of the same issues:

The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples (2002, p.1).

Smith talks about a growing number of indigenous scholars who are investigating protocols and methodologies for indigenous research from a critical or feminist approach. She sees the need to develop new indigenous methodologies as well.

Voice and Perspective

In qualitative research, particularly in minority and feminist research, the concept of voice is very important. Whose voice is being privileged in the research? I have situated myself within the research to be aware of what perspective I have, and how that influences the study. I have also used the words of the participants in conversational individual and group interviews, and allowed the data to point out the direction through a modified grounded theory approach to analysis. With these strategies, I hope that I have allowed the voice of the students of the Culture and History group to create the knowledge. There is ample evidence in the literature of this type of research. In her study of women involved in a vocational training program in the United Kingdom, Brine (1994) uses ontological positioning (the understanding of the researcher's perspective and its affect on the data), loosely structured interviews and a grounded theory approach to data analysis. She states that this method "allows the research to move from the ground, from the researched" (p.11), and in this way, the theories are generated from the lived experiences of the participants.

Haig-Brown's 1995 study discussed earlier also uses positioning of the researcher and stresses how important it is to consider this in your research. There are many other examples of qualitative research projects with adult learners that use conversational or loosely structured interviews and an inductive method of data analysis, allowing for the student's perspective or voice (Eichar, 2000 and Haig-Brown, 1995, 1997). Some of

these studies include, as I do, the changes in the lives of participants in specific programs from their perspective. (Baptiste, I., Lalley, K., Milacci, F., Mushi, H, 2001; Bossort, P., Cottingham, B., Gardner, L. 1995; and Bingman, M.B., Ebert, O. 2000). The difference between these studies and my study is that all of the students in the cited studies are or were enrolled in mainstream educational programs, not in a program focusing on gaining traditional knowledge. I do feel that the similarities are close enough that by following the general methodology of some of the cited studies, I have been able to find valuable answers to my research questions.

Who Does the Research?

There is another research issue that is gaining importance in the First Nations educational literature: Who does the research? According to Mihesuah (1998) in the introduction to Natives and academics: Researching and writing about American Indians, many tribes such as the Hopi, Oklahoma Cherokee, the Navajo, and the San Carlos Apache have put strict limitations on who can do research in their communities and what they can research. Mihesuah gives many examples of researchers who write about Indians without giving the subjects any voice in the research. For example, Gutierrez wrote about Pueblo marriage, sexuality and power without talking to Pueblo people (Mihesuah, 1998 p. 6). As a British Columbia example, Archibald (1997) asserts that Castens (1991) study of the Okanagan people was done without consultation using only one informant and does not represent the people accurately.

Where do non-Indians fit into the research process? Quoting Robbins and Tippeconnic (1985), Mihesuah explains that non-Indians shouldn't be prevented from conducting research in Indian education, but that Indians should be encouraged to do

their own research (Mihesuah, 1998, p.197). The ideal place for the non-Native researcher who wants to be involved in Native research is to mentor from afar (Mihesuah, 1998). Smith (2002), speaking about research and the Maori people of New Zealand, also states that there is a role for non-indigenous researchers as mentors, but the push is for the Maori to do their own research:

With very few trained indigenous researchers available, one of the roles non-indigenous researchers have needed to play is as mentors of indigenous research assistants. Increasingly, however, there have been demands by indigenous communities for research to be undertaken exclusively by indigenous researchers. It is thought that Maori people need to take greater control over the questions they want to address, and invest more energy and commitment into the education and empowering of Maori people as researchers (Smith, 2002 p. 178).

Archibald (2004) echoes this same sentiment.

...This does not mean that non-Native people should be forever excluded from the conversation. I am suggesting that we, First Nations, need some space to talk: to share our stories in our own way, to create our culturally based discourses, develop our ways to validate our discourses, then open the conversation for others to join (p. 26).

When I attended a Mount Currie Band Council meeting in September 2003 to get permission to do my research, three Council members expressed negative feelings about research based on past experiences in Mount Currie. One person stated that it would be better if I partnered with a Mount Currie Band member. In the end, it was decided that because of I had been teaching in the community and involved in community events for almost eight years, I could have permission, with limitations, to do research on my own in the community and have a Mount Currie band member on my committee. Although I include the participants in this study in a small part of the planning and in some of the reflection, I am taking the position of primary researcher. I

am not acting as a mentor in this study. My research has caused me to think long and hard about how or even if I will conduct First Nations research in the future. My goal now has become to support the people in Mount Currie who want to do their own research by sharing what I know about the process.

Often in First Nations research, as in the case in Mount Currie, there are concerns about who owns the information after it is collected, and the First Nations want control over how the information will be used in the future. “We accept as a given that whites have as much prerogative to write and speak about us and our cultures as we have to write and speak about them and theirs. The question is how it is done.... and why it is done.” (Wendy Rose in Whitt, 1998 p.142). In order to do research in Mount Currie, I had to go before the Mount Currie Band Chief and Council and present my proposal. There were many questions and suggestions after my presentation. In two weeks, the Chief and Council gave me a list of things I had to do before I could conduct my research, including a detailed schedule for the research, and a letter stating that any further use of the information I collected would have to be approved by the Mount Currie Band. After I completed the required tasks, I was given permission in the form of a Band Council resolution (BCR)(Appendix E) to conduct research in the community. In this way, some First Nations are taking more control of information collected in their area from their people.

Overwhelmingly, the recent research in First Nations education has been done using qualitative methods, mostly informal interviews and inductive analysis of data allowing the voice of the participants to come through. Many of the studies cited value reflection at each stage, and many include the participants in the reflective process. I

believe that this kind of qualitative research has allowed me to respectfully discover the multiple ‘truths’ and represent all of the voices involved in the study, even though I only included the participants in reflecting on their own contributions (interview transcripts), not on the analysis. The results, describing the program and documenting the students’ perceptions of what worked for them and what didn’t, will be shared with the participants and the community by distributing copies of the thesis. It is my hope that this study will add to the body of knowledge the community requires to develop effective, community-based programs that reflect Lil’wat culture and traditional knowledge.

The Theories

First Nations Educational Theories

Many of the emerging First Nations theories incorporate the holistic model of the sacred circle or the medicine wheel to allow for a holistic approach to education. I am offering a small sample of what is available and I feel that such a model applies to the Lil’wat Culture and History program and is consistent with Lil’wat worldview. Weenie (1998) explains that the sacred circle encompasses mental, physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions to learning, and that language, culture, ceremony, and prayer are vital components. Weenie diagrams the sacred circle and all of the aspects that are encompassed. Dyck (1998) uses the medicine wheel to compare what is holistic about western science and aboriginal science. Hampton (1995) uses the six directions and the many aspects in each direction to offer an organizational principle for Indian education. Calliou (1995) suggests a medicine wheel model to address racism in the educational system. Nee-Benham and Cooper (2000) document the educational models envisioned by fourteen Indigenous educators from around the world. The organizational model used

for their collective vision is a ring of fire with four major aspects: critical development of the intellect, Native spiritual wisdom, healthy body and environment, and preservation and revitalization of Native languages, arts and traditions. Archibald (2004) asserts that the circle, and concentric circles representing the past and future generations, are accepted models for the holistic First Nations worldview. Other models are based on storytelling (Lanigan, 1998), the rainbow (George, 2003), and modeling (Swan, 1998).

Critical Theory

Critical pedagogy is a way of looking at education that has developed over the last three decades and was inspired by the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School. Since the start of the Frankfurt School in prewar Germany's Institute for Social Research, theorists such as Adorno, Marcuse, Horkheimer, and Fromm, and more recently, Habermas, with their theoretical basis in Marxist thought, have been influential across many disciplines. Critical pedagogy emerged when these theories were applied to education (Mezirow, 2000). The many and varied aspects of critical pedagogy that have developed, each with its own set of beliefs and practices, have, according to McLaren (1993), one set of unifying objectives: to empower those who do not have power, and to create a more just and equal society. Critical pedagogy is based on the principle that schools are not neutral and education is a political and cultural act. Curricula are political documents. Teachers, whether they acknowledge it or not are political. In the words of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire,

This is a great discovery, education is politics! When a teacher discovers that he or she is a politician, too, the teacher has to ask, What kind of politics am I doing in the classroom? That is, in favor of whom am I being a teacher? The teacher works in favor of something and against something (Shor, 1987, title page).

Michael Apple acknowledges how hegemony is sustained in the economic realm through education, but he sees an even more crucial realm where education works to reproduce inequality, that of cultural capital which the “schools preserve and distribute” (Apple, 1990, p. 3). For my study, one of the important questions is one asked by many critical pedagogy theorists: “Whose knowledge is being preserved and distributed?” (Apple, 1990, 1995))(Shor, 1992). I see the Lil’wat Culture and History Program as a site of resistance because it places the value of traditional knowledge above the knowledge of the dominant culture.

...Indigenous knowledges speak to questions about location, politics, identity, and culture, and about the history of peoples and their land. The process of teaching (and learning about) their cultures is, for many indigenous peoples, an act of political resistance to colonialized and imposed ways of knowing (Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, 2000).

Another important question, “What changes have happened for the learner during this program” is addressed by a theory which evolved from critical theory, transformational theory.

Transformational Theory

As adult learners, we are caught in our own histories.(Mezirow 1991, p.1)

Drawing from many disciplines, including psychology, psychotherapy, sociology and philosophy, Mezirow developed his theory of transformative learning over a period of twenty or more years beginning with a study in 1975. The impetus for developing this theory came mainly from three events in his life. Mezirow had been a social change educator working in community development and adult literacy in the U.S and around the world. The first event was a disorienting dilemma that occurred when he was exposed to

the writings of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. He realized at that point that the theoretical premise of his practice was missing a crucial element: that which Freire calls ‘conscientization’ or the process of achieving “a deepening awareness of both the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and...their capacity to transform that reality by acting upon it” (Freire, 1970, p. 27). Mezirow was forced to look at his theory and practice and to recognize the reality of the power embedded in the community development process he was involved in. For the next several years, Mezirow underwent a transformative experience as he altered his meaning perspectives and his world view. (Mezirow, 1991,p.xvii)

The second event occurred not for Mezirow, but for his wife, who returned to school and underwent her own transformative process. Because of her experience, Mezirow immersed himself in an extensive research project involving women returning to school, and from this research emerged the basic tenets of transformational theory (Mezirow, 1991,p. xvii).

Another pivotal event for Mezirow and his theory development was working with psychoanalyst Roger Gould who was looking at psychoanalytic approaches in education. Gould felt that a transformative learning experience could help a student who was going through difficult transitions in life overcome learning impediments rooted in childhood experience. To Mezirow, this process followed from and extended ‘conscientization’ (p. xvii)

From these experiences and the results of his research with the women returning to college, the beginnings of a firmly constructivist transformative learning theory developed. Mezirow describes the steps that a student goes through to achieve a

‘personal transformation’, right from the event or ‘disorienting dilemma’ that causes her to reevaluate her current ways of thinking, through changing perspectives, and reintegrating the new perspectives into her life and her society (Cranton, 1994, p. 23).

According to the assumptions of constructivism, meaning does not exist ‘out there’ but within each of us and is shaped by our experiences and reinforced by our communication and interaction with others. Therefore, according to Mezirow, although the world exists outside of self, what we make of that world is open to change, as it is a result of our own past experiences:

Conception determines perception, and we can know reality only by acting on it. Inasmuch as this viewpoint presupposed that meaning is interpretation, and since information, ideas, and contexts change, our present interpretations of reality are always subject to revision or replacement (Mezirow, 1991, p. xiv).

Mezirow calls the way that each of us sees the world and interacts with it based on our personal experiences our ‘meaning perspective’. We expect things to be a certain way based on what we have experienced, and everything is filtered through these expectations. Our ‘meaning perspectives’ are acquired or assimilated uncritically as we grow and experience life, but many of them may be distorted or based on faulty information. In transformative theory, learning occurs when the learner acquires new information, and reflects on how the new information fits with his or her existing meaning perspectives. If the learner changes existing meaning perspectives based on the new learning, then transformation has occurred (Cranton, 1994). According to Mezirow,.

Reflective learning becomes transformative whenever assumptions or premises are found to be distorting, inauthentic, or otherwise invalid. Transformative learning results in new or transformed meaning schemes or, when reflection focuses on premises, transformed meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1991, p. 6).

Building on this initial work, Mezirow drew on the work of Habermas, particularly Habermas's three domains of learning. He incorporates two of Habermas's descriptions of domains of learning: instrumental, which is task-oriented learning involving how to manipulate the world around you, and communicative learning, which is understanding the communication of others. Mezirow replaces Habermas's third domain, emancipatory learning, with his own process of transformation encompassing both the instrumental and communicative domains (Mezirow, 2000). As stated previously, transformation occurs when a learner critically reflects on his or her existing assumptions and changes the basic frames of reference upon which these assumptions are based (Mezirow, 2000). The question when relating this study to the theories of Mezirow is "Has transformation occurred for these students, or have they been involved in instrumental or some other type of learning?"

CHAPTER FOUR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

For the past century or more, traditional knowledge was condemned as “heathen” or “folklore,” but Aboriginal peoples’ traditional teachings and knowledge are, at long last, being recognized as valid and valued. It is the resilience of aboriginal peoples, the world over, that has kept alive their oral traditions and teachings (Huntley, 1998 p.30)

Definitions of Traditional Knowledge

To the Lil’wat people, traditional knowledge is the skills and knowledge that have been passed down for generations over thousands of years that have enabled the Lil’wat people to live successfully in their environment (Pierre, 2004). Other First Nations have defined traditional knowledge in their own ways. For example, the Deh Cho First Nations in the Northwest Territories developed a definition for use by their Land Use Planning Committee:

Traditional knowledge is defined as knowledge and values which have been acquired through experience, observation, from the land or from spiritual teachings, and handed down from one generation to another (Deh Cho Traditional Knowledge Policy, 2003, p.1)

Hall, Sefa Dei, and Rosenberg (2000), who have studied Indigenous knowledge around the world, offer the following explanation of the concept of Indigenous knowledge:

...a body of knowledge associated with the long-term occupancy of a certain place. This knowledge refers to traditional norms and social values, as well as to mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate people’s way of living and making sense of their world. It is the sum of the experience and knowledge of a given social group, and forms the basis of decision making in the face of challenges both familiar and unfamiliar. For millennia, many indigenous cultures were guided by a world view based on the following: seeing the individual as part of nature; respecting and reviving the wisdom of the elders: giving

consideration to the living, the dead, and future generations; sharing responsibility, wealth, and resources within the community; and embracing spiritual values, traditions, and practices reflecting connections to a higher order, to the culture and to the earth (p. 6)

The knowledge that is 'passed down' in the mainstream institutions is the knowledge of the dominant society. This knowledge serves a political purpose in that it supports 'the status quo' and "is a method of reproduction and preservation of the inequality among people. The Lil'wat Culture and History Program serves as a 'site of resistance' against the knowledge of the dominant society, because it privileges the traditional knowledge of the Lil'wat people. The curriculum of the Lil'wat Culture and History program valued the traditional knowledge and way of learning, and as such, marked the program as a site of resistance to the imposition of the knowledge of the dominant society because, as Michael Apple asserts, curriculum is never neutral:

The curricula is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of the nation. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some group's vision of legitimate knowledge (Apple, 1993, p. 45).

This program differed from most other programs in that it legitimated, or raised the importance of, the traditional knowledge of the Lil'wat people and used this knowledge as the basis for education. While in most educational programs, the knowledge of the dominant society is taught and valued above others, in this program, the Lil'wat people selected their own traditional knowledge and built the program around it. By initiating this program, the Lil'wat have shown their commitment to preserving and legitimizing their traditional knowledge.

The Lil'wat Culture and History Program

At the beginning of the Lil'wat Culture and History Program, the students met with the director and together they decided the four main areas of traditional Lil'wat cultural learning that they would focus on: Lil'wat language, cedar work, including inner cedar bark (sluwaoz) and cedar roots (akwal'micw); food gathering and preservation, and building a traditional pit house (s7istken). Other aspects of Lil'wat life such as drum making, helping in the community, singing, and painting also became part of the program. What follows is more information about each of the four main topics, and some information about how each one was incorporated into the program.

Language

Language is the backbone of culture. If a culture is to survive, it must preserve its language. The dominance of spoken and written English is a danger to the very survival of the Indigenous languages which embody the "people's ways of thinking, communicating, and establishing identity" (Leavitt, 1995, p.128). In the Assembly of First Nations 1993 document, Nation building through Aboriginal languages and literacy, elders talk about how they view languages:

Our native language embodies a value system about how we ought to live and relate to each other...It gives a name to relations among kin, to roles and responsibilities among family members, to ties with the broader clan group. There are no English words for these relationships...Now, if you destroy our languages, you not only break down these relationships, but you also destroy other aspects of our Indian way of life and culture, especially those that describe man's connection with nature, the Great Spirit, and the order of things. Without our languages, we will cease to exist as a separate people (Taylor in AFN, 1993 from Hebert, 2000, p. 63)

In Mount Currie, the people speak the Lil'wat language, which is part of the Interior Salish language division in Northwestern North America. There is another word

that refers to the language, ucwalmícwts, but this means to speak your language and is not the name of the language (Pierre, 2004). Language preservation has been of paramount importance in Mount Currie for many years. Curriculum materials such as booklets illustrating Lil'wat words and their English counterparts, tapes of the language, and story books with both languages were developed as far back as the late 1970's and early 1980's. Several people in the community took extensive academic training in the language and in linguistics and received degrees (Pierre, 2004). Language is an important part of the curriculum of the Xitolacw Community School in Mount Currie, and in 2003, a Lil'wat immersion nursery program with extensive parent involvement was started. It was fitting that learning and practicing the language was one of the four main goals of the program.

The Lil'wat Culture and History students had planned to spend some time every day learning the language from their supervisor, as well as practicing the language when they interacted with the elders and other language speakers in the community. From the data, it appears that very little language learning was done for a variety of reasons.

Cedar Root and Inner Cedar Bark Work

The Lil'wat people made extensive use of the cedar tree, tsatawaoz'. The roots, akwal'micw, were peeled and split, then used to make baskets, and the soft inner cedar bark, sluwaoz, was used to make clothing. I had the opportunity to accompany a group of students from a First Nations studies course at Ts'zil Learning Centre, in June of 2004, when they went on a cedar root and bark collecting expedition in the forest around the new site of Mount Currie. On this trip, I found out that gathering is not only the physical collecting of materials, but it has ecological, cooperative, emotional, and spiritual aspects

as well. When we first got to a spot on a hill where there were many cedar trees, everyone gathered around one tree for a demonstration of inner cedar bark collection. An offering of tobacco was made to the tree before any gathering began. The instructor and the students studied the chosen tree to see where the knots and branches were that would interfere with the strip they wanted to take., and they found a good spot on the tree. Then, a 10 inch axe cut was made horizontally about three feet up the tree, just to the inside of the inner bark. An axe was used to wedge the inner and outer bark away from the tree above the cut. Once the strip was started, it came away quite easily up the tree, getting slightly narrower as it moved upwards. One student took over the job of pulling the strip from the tree, while other students encouraged him and helped him when it got difficult. One student said a prayer of thanks, and another sang a traditional song as the work was being done. Only one narrow strip was taken from a tree. When that strip was finished, the students spread out over the hillside to find other trees and so they would not take too much from a particular area. When someone found a good tree, he or she sang a traditional song of thanks. Other students spread out and began digging cedar roots, which was done in the same respectful manner. Students talked about the peace they felt being out on the land and participating in traditional activities (field trip with Martina Pierre, June 2004). The Lil'wat Culture and History group dug their own roots, and collected bark from living trees or from logs as they were brought in to the log sorting grounds. They learned how to make canoe bailers, cedar roses, bracelets, and other articles with the inner cedar bark, and how to split the roots for baskets.

Food Gathering and Preservation

A staple of the Lil'wat diet was salmon (ts'úqwaoz) which was caught using weirs, traps, spears, hook and line, and twine gillnets made from Indian hemp. They caught spring, humpback, and sockeye, with sockeye (láwa7) being the most important because it was smoke-dried (ts'wan) for the winter food supply. There was a feast and 'thank you' ceremony for the first sockeye of the season (Mack, 1977). Traditional hunting was done with bow and arrow made from saskatoon (tsaqwmaoz') branches and deer sinew, or with snares and deadfall traps. There were cleansing rites for hunters. The deer (st'ula7) was extremely important, and every part of the animal had a use, even the brains, which were used as a softener in the hide tanning process (Mitchell, 1977).

The Lil'wat Culture and History group fished for salmon with gill nets and prepared barbequed salmon (taqsa7) over a fire in the traditional way. They also gathered berries and medicines, and went hunting in the traditional territory. They did, however, make use of more modern technology, when they canned salmon and moose meat, and froze salmon fillets, mainly for the elders to use in their gatherings. What is traditional about these practices even when modern technology is employed is the idea that one needs to gather food and prepare it for the winter.

S7istken (Traditional Pit House)

The s7istken was the traditional winter dwelling of the Lil'wat people. In Lillooet Stories, Ritchie (1977) explains how the house is build by digging a pit, then building a pyramid structure of logs over the top with an opening at the top for an entrance and smoke hole. Cedar planks were placed over the logs, and the cracks were filled with cedar bark, then this framework was covered with dirt. Inside, a platform was

constructed about one foot high all around the outer edge of the pit. This was where the people slept, using boughs and inner cedar bark to sleep on. A ladder was made from a notched cedar log. The sunken pits where s7istkens used to be are visible in many sites around Mount Currie, and these underground houses are featured in many of the Lil'wat stories and legends (Ritchie, 1977). The Lil'wat Culture and History group attempted to build an s7istken for the Wheteema festival, a cultural festival held in Whistler, but they could not dig a hole, so they created only the top of the home. In this case, the students used modern technology such as tools to assist them in the building of a traditional home. S7istkens had been extensively used in the past, and the students had chosen to learn how to build one, and expected to be able to erect it somewhere in Mount Currie to be used as a place of teaching. As explained later in this paper, this never happened.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODS

Ethnography

According to Geertz (1973), ethnography is “an elaborate venture in.....thick description” (p. 6). Looking at culture as a kind of complex web of understanding or significance that a person or group has woven around themselves, ethnography is an attempt to understand, describe, or interpret something that occurs within that complex web (Geertz 1973). I have attempted to describe and analyze the Lil’wat Culture and History program in a similar fashion through the thoughts and feelings of those who participated in it, within the web of the Lil’wat culture and the history of First Nations education. Through loosely structured interviews, informal observation, and background information, I have tried to describe and analyze this program, and provide a possible framework for those involved to develop ways to address the issues that arose.

I did an adapted grounded theory based analysis which allowed the voices of the participants to be heard, and allowed me to inductively take my direction from the data (Kirby and McKenna, 1989). I did, however, have some theories in mind that I thought might be useful in the analysis, so I did not take all my direction from the data itself. These qualitative methods were the most effective way of researching this type of question because I did not know what answers would come from the data and what direction the research would take. The informal observation that I conducted involved being at community events where the Lil’wat Culture and History group was participating. One such event was the Educational Achievement night in Mount Currie where each of these students spoke about what the program meant to him or her. I also

met these students and talked to them in the process of carrying on everyday activities such as shopping, and working at the Ts'zil Learning Centre. I conducted loosely structured interviews which allowed for a wide variety of possible answers to the research question "Describe, for me, your feelings about your participation in all aspects of the Lil'wat Culture and History Program." This type of research also allows topics which are important to the participants to emerge as the data is being analyzed.

Participants

The participants were students from the Lil'wat Culture and History program who agreed to take part in the study and to be interviewed. Although there were fourteen students in the program, only eleven students initially agreed to participate. Seven students actually took part, three women and four men ranging in age from 19 to 60. All seven of the participants completed the program. Four others initially agreed, but were unavailable for many reasons during the interview period, and did not wish to rebook interviews.

Setting up the Interviews

After getting the necessary permissions from the Mount Currie Indian Band and UNBC, I met with the students in their classroom and we discussed the research process over pizza. Participants were given a package containing a letter that explained the entire process including what the research was about, the benefits and risks of participation, how confidentiality would be maintained through coding and pseudonyms, and who would have access to the information. The students were told that they could stop their participation at any time (appendix A). The package also contained a research consent form (appendix B), and a list of possible questions (appendix D). We went over

this material together, and the students asked questions and decided when and how the interviews would be done. For example, they wanted the interviews in a place where they couldn't be overheard or interrupted, and they wanted them held during the day.

I had originally planned to discuss some general aspects the program in this session, guided by several questions: What have you learned in the program? How have you learned it? Describe your daily activities. What things were valuable to you in the program, and what things were not? What changes would you like to see if the program is run again? Were there any personal changes for you during the program that you would feel free to discuss in this meeting? The students, however, made it very clear at this time that any discussion about the program would have to take place in the private sessions, and they were only willing to discuss the process of the research in a group meeting. Also at this time, the students expressed the desire to be anonymous in the paper, so that they could say whatever they felt instead of being careful not to say anything negative. Each student was asked to think of a nickname before the first interview, and the first initial of the nickname was used in the study. The students who agreed to participate signed consent forms.

Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were conducted in the last week of May and first week of June, 2004, in the adult basic education classroom at Ts'zil Learning Centre in Mount Currie. The research explanation letter and the permission letter were all reviewed again at the start of each interview. All interviews were tape recorded, and notes were taken. These were one-to-one interviews conducted by myself in a loosely structured format. The questions, which were used as guidelines only when the participants needed prompting to

keep talking about their experiences, drew out information about the program and what the students did each day, their expectations from the program, and their feelings and thoughts about the program in general. There were also questions about personal change: What changes have happened in how you feel about yourself, how you relate to others, and how you live your life as a result of participating in this program, and how or why do you think these changes happened? I found that an initial question along the lines of “When did you first become interested in participating in the Lil’wat Culture and History program?” was needed to get people to start talking, and then, guidance was necessary if they did not cover a particular topic such as helping in the community or previous education. Students were also free to talk about anything that came to mind as they spoke about the program, and nothing was considered off topic. The length of the interviews varied from 45 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on how much each participant wanted to say. A ten dollar honourarium was given to each participant as a ‘thank you’ for his or her time.

All sessions were taped and transcribed, and only the researcher and the participant have access to the taped information. Each participant was given a printed copy of the transcription of his or her interview, and had a chance to reflect on the data, and comment, add information, or correct errors at a lunch meeting after all of the interviews were transcribed.

As background information about the history of the program, and history of education in Mount Currie, and the world view of the Lil’wat people, I also interviewed the director of the Lil’wat Employment Services, the department that initiated the program; the dean of Ts’zil Learning Centre who is also a Mount Currie elder; and a

member of the Mount Currie School Board, who is also an elder and was the administrator of Mount Currie's first Band operated school.

Doing the Analysis

The next step in the research was to analyze the data by coding and categorizing it depending on what patterns and categories emerged as I read and reflected on the information I had gathered. Each participant's responses were sorted and entered into the data using code names to preserve the confidentiality of the original speaker. Reflection, by the researcher, and by the participants in the meeting following the interviews, was an integral part of the process. The analysis began even as I transcribed the interviews because I made connections, asked questions, and formed categories in my mind as I worked with the data. For the more formal analysis, I used a grounded theory based approach of teasing out related "chunks of meaning" and looking for emerging categories as outlined in Miles and Huberman (1994), and Kirby and McKenna (1989). This 'teasing' is similar to the 'open coding' described by Strauss and Corbin (1996). Kirby and McKenna adapt Glaser and Strauss's original grounded theory to some extent by focusing on two aspects of the research: 'intersubjectivity' and 'critical reflection on the social context'. Intersubjectivity affects both the way the interviews are conducted and the way the data is analyzed. Intersubjectivity requires the researcher to carry on an "authentic" and equal dialogue with the participant during the interview process, which I did. In the analysis, the researcher must take care that each bit of data is processed and "allowed to speak in the analysis" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989 p.127). I did consider every bit of data in my analysis. 'Critical reflection' is the process of considering the social and political context of the participant group (Kirby and McKenna, 1989). As I

analyzed the data, I had to keep in mind that this was a First Nations group living on reserve who have not been participating in the education and employment programs that have been offered, and who have varying degrees of education and traditional knowledge.

Each bit of speech was coded and organized. Sections of speech, bibbits, were organized depending on their properties (what elements of what categories they contained), and then placed into categories such as 'traditional knowledge known before the program', 'traditional knowledge gained in the program', 'conflict with classmate', etc. The headings for the categories arose from the data because each speech segment needed a place to go, and some fit into more than one category. For example, a participant was describing a classmate giving her a dirty look or saying something nasty about her, so this required a new category titled "conflict within group". One participant was angry about not being able to build an s7istken, so that bibbit needed to be in two categories: conflict with management, and s7istken.

At first, I put the bibbits into categories on computer using Microsoft word, but found that that didn't give me the opportunity to interact with the data the way I wanted to. What I found more useful, was printing out multiple copies of the transcriptions using a different colour paper for each participant, then cutting out 'bibbits, and taping them onto one of twelve sheets of poster board that I had put up all around my room. As I cut out 'bibbits' I would create a heading on the poster board for each one and tape the 'bibbet' under it. If I could place the new 'bibbet' under an existing heading, I did, but if not, I created a new heading, or category for it. Bibbits were often placed in more than one category. During this process and after all of the speech 'bibbits' from all of the interview transcripts were placed into a category, I reflected on how meaningful each

category was, and whether some categories could be combined or eliminated, and others created. This was a long, but exciting process, as I sipped my coffee every morning and reflected on the meaning of the 'bibbits' in each category, how they related to each other and to 'bibbits' in other categories. This process corresponds to 'axial coding' as described in Strauss and Corbin (1996) which is described as "the process of relating categories to their subcategories" (p. 123). The next step was to see if certain concepts crossed the boundaries of the categories and could become theories, a step that Strauss and Corbin call selective coding. Then, I had to decide how these could be represented in my thesis. The analysis involved reading and rereading the data, and thinking about the social context the Lil'wat Culture and History students were living in: First Nations, living on reserve, the history of oppression, learning the traditional skills of their community. This was not a linear process, and I found myself moving constantly back and forth between open coding, axial coding and trying to generate theory. After many readings, some bibbits were placed into more than one category, or in a different category than originally thought, and some categories became sub-categories or were eliminated. This process required constant reflection on the data, what is being said by the data, and how that related to traditional knowledge, transformation and social context. It also involves comparing the categories to each other and looking for patterns. Transformation or change did emerge as an overarching concept, as did holism, and resistance. At this point, I analyzed the data to see if the research I had done represented or fit into existing theories concerned with First Nations education and transformation, so I was going back and forth between the data and the theories. I was, and still am to a certain extent, confused about what constitutes new theory as dictated by a complete 'grounded theory'

approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1996). I did, however, come up with new information from the data, which I used to present a description of the program and to develop conclusions about what worked and what didn't. From my analysis I also developed a process for the stakeholders to address the issues that arose so that future programs of this kind can be more successful. Before and during the data gathering and analysis, I felt that there were some possible explanatory theories such as Mezirow's transformational theory (Mezirow, 1991, 2000), critical theory (Giroux, 1988, 1997 and Shor, 1980) or some of the First Nations educational theories of incorporating the four directions (Ermine, 1995 and Hampton, 1995). These theories did, to a certain extent, represent and explain the data that was analyzed in this study.

CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The first categories that emerged from the data were based on the various parts of the program: the beginning, goal setting, life skills, power play, NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming), structure of intellect testing and remediation, sensory integration gym, assisting in the community, traditional knowledge prior to the program, traditional knowledge gained through the program, s7istken (traditional pit house), Lil'wat language, and skills the students would still like to learn.

The next set of categories that emerged brought out topics and issues other than those directly connected to a section of the program: issues with group cohesion, management, and leadership within the group; students who left the program; education and learning, including prior education, how people learn and teach, learning from each other and the community, who should teach, learning about yourself, and residential school; wisdom to live by, parenting, religion, family and personal issues, transforming negative lifestyles, suggestions for improving the program, changes in the lives of the students because of the program, and stories.

Part A: Data Concerning the Sections of the Program

The Beginning

People decided to participate in the Lil'wat Culture and History program for a variety of reasons. One was on his way to apply for upgrading, and he noticed that a meeting was happening about learning the culture, so he sat in on the meeting and decided to apply for the program. He had, however, been thinking about furthering his education for some time prior to this;

.....I was feeling like I was getting like 34, 34 years old, and I don't have a grade 12 education, so that's been at the top of my mind for a long time now, getting a grade 12 diploma (M).

Another was taking accounting and computer courses, but when he heard about this program where you could learn about Lil'wat culture, he switched (B). One student stated that those who were on social assistance with the Mount Currie Band were called to a meeting regarding the program, and some were given an ultimatum: join the program or get cut off welfare (H). Two other students said that they received a letter and had to attend a meeting at the gym, and from this meeting with about 24 people, 16 were chosen as program participants, some on social assistance and some not (Y and M). Another student says she was attending a life skills program with her father, when they heard about the Lil'wat Culture and History program. They applied, but her father dropped out (C). One student says he usually works in farming, but he hadn't been doing anything, and he saw being chosen for this program as an honour: "I was one of the fortunate ones to be welcomed to the class."(R).

One student thought that learning about the culture and history would allow him to help the youth and the community get back to a time when everyone cared about each other.

That's why I said I gotta join the culture and history program because I been involved with a lot of the youth, where I seen a lot of the youth because I lived here all my life. I'm 46 years old and I lived here all this time. I seen the way it started from the old village, I call it the village, I don't say the reserve. And right from all the changes to the hatred. The hate of life and all that . . . seeing all that stuff right from loving life and living together to separation. Even though we all live together in the village, we call reserve now, even though we are right next door, our hearts are in other valleys- that much separation in our hearts, not caring for each other anymore. I feel like I have that job to change that part a little bit in due time (B).

Another student, who had been approached by one of the organizers, thought he was going to be one of the instructors, but the reality was quite different. He did eventually become the supervisor

I was under the impression that I would be kinda like one of the instructors or something, not grouped in with the rest kinda like where I was put, eh. _____ approached me....two months before the actual start up, eh. She brought the concept to my attention (H).

When the program first started, students had some time to get to know each other before the first scheduled section, life skills, started. This was seen as a very positive time by most of the students.

I thought it had potential to get up and go, you know, with the right enthusiasm, I guess it could have.I couldn't wait to get down here when it first started. I couldn't wait to get down here. (H)

Goal Setting (Topics)

There was a process involving students and management, at a meeting before the program started, of choosing together what the goals of the program would be as far as the traditional skills and knowledge.

At the beginning of this whole program they said we had four projects to work with, and we barely did. Like there's language, we barely did. Then the cedar work, that was good, we only did so much. The inner bark, or the baskets, Food preservation, sort of, we could have been learning more (M).

We had a list of everything we had to do... not all of them were followed: the language, the s7istken, the cedar bark and roots, and . .there was one more thing we had to do ##### ... food preservation (M4).

We had to pick 4 topics and we picked cedar root, preserving, our language, and an s7istken. It's a good program. They sort of took us off social assistance, but we are still on social assistance, so it is like a wop (welfare work) program (Y).

These were not the only skills that were learned in the program, but the focus was on the four: Lil'wat language, s7istken, cedar bark and root work, and gathering and preserving traditional foods.

Life Skills

The life skills section of the program started in March 2003, and carried on for five weeks. A majority of the students enjoyed the life skills and had various views about what it accomplished for them, but some felt that it was detrimental to the program. One student felt that life skills taught them how to be positive:

...we started off with life skills to have positive training, positive thinking and stop saying I can't do it, or I don't know how to do it, and won't do it, and start saying I hope I can, and wish I can. We can do it....and completing it feeling good in your own heart, not worrying about what other people are thinking about what you are doing...(B)

There were other positive comments:

The life skills was really great, like, it opened me up and stuff. (M)

Well, I've never really taken life skills or pathways until I took that one course and it was seriously good (C).

It was fun.....we did collages and stuff. That was something different (M4)

I'm still using.....that positive training I took, you know, going forward as it counts in a good way (B)

...as it went along (the life skills) it just started falling into place, like everybody was positive with an up and at it attitude, and it was like we were a team. (M)

...it (the life skills) was bringing me back every day (Y).

One student did feel that the life skills should have been more in-depth working on issues.

There was also a down side to life skills. Some of the students felt that it brought back emotional memories and feeling from the past and didn't give the person a way to get rid of them. There is a perception that some students used the issues brought up in life skills as an excuse not to do their best.

Along the way it turned out not to be (positive) because most of them used it as a crutch to not be positive anymore (B).

The life skills program for me, it gave them an easy way out....they start throwing that stuff at us and it was opening old wounds and cuts and not covering them, eh, leaving them bare. It left them open to self pity, what I came to see as self pity because they couldn't forget themselves long enough to concentrate on their work (H).

Some students had recommendations about how the life skills part of the program could have been done in a different way.

It should have been one separate thing if they want to be part.... needed to deal with that crap, then it should have been done separate, and then when it came to the work (learning traditional skills) we should have been left to do it

They should have just let us work on the culture and history and roots and stuff instead of dragging out all the internal crap that was there.(H)

(Not to have) anything to do with our trauma, you know, until we are all positive and able to handle our traumas. ...if we are going to learn our skills, then we will get very positive...and we will take counseling after in a good way (B)

One student suggested that the group needed a two-week life skills program as a wrap up when the program ended (Y), and another said to try life skills interspersed every two weeks or so with the learning of traditional skills (C), instead of all in one block.

Forum Theatre Workshop

Shortly after the life skills portion of the program ended, a team of trainers came up from Vancouver for a week long forum theatre workshop with the Lil'wat Culture and

History group. This workshop, based on the work of Brazilian director Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, takes the participants through games and theatre techniques, and using these finds out what the main issues of concern are in the group. They then work on creating a play based on the main issues that have emerged. At the end of the week, this play is done once all the way through in front of an audience. Then it is done again and the audience members have the opportunity to stop the play when they see that someone is being oppressed, replace the oppressed person, and handle the situation in a different way. Through the audience participation, and the discussion that follows, serious issues can be dealt with and possibly some solutions suggested.

There was a vast difference in the way that the students viewed doing the play. Some felt that it was very worthwhile, and others felt it was a waste of time. Some felt that, as with life skills, it brought up negative feelings and left the students exposed. Even those who were positive about the play talked about the down side as well:

That (power play) was a good experience. I wasn't in the residential thing, but then, seeing what happened, you know, kind of choked me when we first started doing it. And just the way they went right into that play, it almost made me start choking. It just hit me in my heart. That was pretty awesome though. It took us a while because we all felt it. The whole group all choked. It took us a few classes to get over it, eh. to get that feeling, hold you back.It would be awesome to do another one (R).

It was good because it reached out to the people about what's really going on. We had an audience about 50 people at least at the old hall, and we did it the first time, and the people that taught us asked if any of the people in the crowd recognized anything that we did that happened to them in their life. There were a few participants that came from the crowd the second time we did it. I wouldn't mind doing it again (Y).

Because the power play emerges from issues brought up by the students themselves, participation in it brings out memories and feelings about things that

happened in the past. For some students, it brought out memories of family violence, alcoholism, and shame:

The play, wow, I loved it. You know, I got tears in my eyes because I seen the tears in other people's eyes. And it made me realize how my life's been going through. You know, like my mom went through a lot of family violence and spousal abuse or what ever you call it, domestic abuse. And I seen it, you know, like I seen her getting slapped and kicked and punched, everything, you know. She had black eyes, fat lips, and everything...(M)

To me I think that was the hardest thing to go through because it reminded me of when I was a child, because I've seen my parents drink all the time and fight all the time. So....it wasn't that good for me. I think I'm still trying to heal from that..... I think it (power play) just made matters worse, made more memory come up after that (C).

If we are feeling positive about things, they'll be able to handle those plays....and to feel that the things that they were made to feel ashamed of aren't shameful...and that way they're able to step up with their heart in a good way...lots of us we were crying during that whole time because that was tough stuff, eh. especially when you portray something that you have seen your whole life like, you know, and you change it in a good way (B).

For another student, although he was very positive about doing the power play, it brought back memories of the hatred of his own culture that he learned as in school and church as he was growing up.

That (power play) was awesome because I brought out what I said about my brother, when I hated his drum and all Native ways...where...you know, the religion and the alcoholism made me prejudice to my own people. Even the school, integrating with the white school made me hate my own people.....even now I realize too when they used to show us films in the old hall across, the nuns used to show us videos.....westerns where these cowboys are always wiping out Indians. And here we are cheering away! Yeah, Kill those guys!and realizing that after when I was finding out that I was Native, you know, and then all these cowboys that I was cheering on were the ones that were hating me (B).

One student felt that the power play only hastened the 'falling apart' of the group that taking life skills had initiated, and that there wasn't the much needed support to help the class through.

It (the power play) took a lot out of us. We were all falling apart there for awhile and then we had to do this play and some of us relapsed even harder than they figured. We didn't have any ... we had a counselor there but she didn't do her job. You, know, she didn't get up to help.she didn't come and talk to us or anything, she just sat there (M4).

Some of the people from Mount Currie and surrounding communities who had seen the play or heard about it wanted the group to do a play with them. One student felt let down that the Lil'wat Culture and History group didn't carry on doing plays.

.....it was kinda sad because people were asking us to do plays here and there, but we just didn't have the effort to move forward and do a play for the kids up at D'Arcy or down at Skookumchuck.....Lillooet was asking....I felt if we kept doing a play, you know, we'd get better as a group...(M).

This same student appreciated the effort that the members of the group put forth to make the play happen.

Like that was a good effort, I mean, most of those guys didn't want to be, and a few of them are too shy to be around groups, you know, but then they made an effort to be there so that was good (M).

One student did not see the point of having the power play workshop at all, although he did say it could be a tool to help someone work through issues if there was enough time.

For the life of me I couldn't see why it was thrown in. Then again it interfered with what we should have been concentrating on, eh. Given time, it could be healing, but like I say, given two hours or four hours, or six hours, to try to deal with a lifetime of woe and stuff. There wasn't time for closure on a lot of that stuff. It left you more wondering or open, renewed something that maybe you were trying to put away or whatever. (H)

All of the students except two would like to do another power play, but two of those who wanted to do another one stipulated that there would have to be effective counseling support available afterwards. One student suggested that the play be done after the students had become strong through learning the cultural ways and having positive training in life skills.

Neurolinguistic Programming

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is a type of counseling therapy that developed from a study done in the 1970's by Richard Bandler and John Grinder of the effective counseling techniques used by therapists Satir, Erickson, and Perls. Among other things, the therapy involves the effect of words on the nervous system, and time-line work (neurolinguistic programming 2004). It is an accepted therapy in the Mount Currie community, with yearly visits by a therapist. Several community members have received the initial training to become NLP practitioners. Richard Hunt was brought in during the fourth month of the Lil'wat Culture and History program to do two in-depth, four hours sessions with the students. Three of the students felt that these sessions were somewhat beneficial, and one suggested that another type of counseling was required after:

Oh, that (NLP) made me feel really great, but I forgot practicing what he taught me, and that's why I don't think I'm as positive as I used to be (M).

If they had better back up, yeah, I'd do it again (take NLP). I let some of my past go.....in one of his sessions, and I didn't have nowhere to turn to. Well, they suggested a few people but I didn't like the people they suggested (Y).

I didn't really benefit as much as I thought I would, but it kind of settled me down in a way with Richard Hunt (M4)

One student saw some benefit, but was ambivalent about NLP because Richard Hunt was asking him to let go of the negative things in his past, yet he felt that it was the energy from knowing that those negative things were there, that kept him from allowing negative things into his life now.

It (NLP) helped me a bit, because in a way I turned positive in my heart before I met him or anyone else.....I've used some of those things that I've seen to keep the negative world that I seen when I was growing up....to keep me going in a positive way , and he was trying to erase that negative thing that kept my energy powerful as a positive person.if I did get rid of it then I'll have no energy (B).

One of the student saw the NLP sessions in a negative way, and as with life skills, thought that it was detrimental to the program.

I didn't really care for that stuff myself because to me, I dealt with a lot of my issues before this started, eh. And like I said, they just came and raked you and left you.Like, you are trying to solve your life's problems in four hours.all he did was just reopen old wounds, and there was no closure for some of them and some of them dwelled on that for awhile, you know. It became something to fall back on.....a mental crutch. (H)

Another student felt he was just not ready for the depth of NLP sessions.

That (NLP) was too deep for me, I'd take it out (of the program). It was too deep, and personal (R).

A drug and alcohol counselor came near the end of the program to try to get the students working together again and help them look at some of their issues. Some students were ready to listen and some were not.

...some people weren't too enthused about having a counselor come in. and some say they don't need it. They're not ready for a counselor. When they really had to look at themselves it bugged them... I'm always willing to look at myself so it was no problem for me doing the programs that they had. But I saw the struggles that some of them had when they're not ready. They get even more mad (M4).

Structure of Intellect Testing and Sensory Integration Gym

A theory of human intelligence developed by Guilford starting in the mid '40's, Structure of Intellect (SOI) has been adapted and applied to learning as a diagnosis and remediation tool by Meeker. Twenty seven different brain functions are tested in a 3-4 hour session, and then a program of remedial booklets is developed depending on the outcomes of the testing (SOI systems website, July 2004). The physical side of this program in Mount Currie, the sensory integration gym, is an adaptation of the one officially sanctioned by SOI. It involves working through a series of physical activities designed to help the left and right hemispheres of the brain work together, and to assist in the learning process. The props include balance boards, rotation boards, mini-trampolines, basketball hoops, pendulum balls, etc. Both aspects of this program have been widely accepted in Mount Currie, and are in use, when funding permits, at the adult centre, Ts'zil Learning Centre, and the community school, Xitolacw. Several people from Mount Currie have received the level one training for SOI which enables them to administer and mark the test, and develop the remedial program. Many more have had the orientation to working in the sensory integration gym. There are plans to incorporate the physical aspects into the nursery and day care programs.

The students who took the SOI test felt it was useful, but they felt it wasn't completed or followed through because the instructor had a traumatic family situation to work through and had to leave.

That went good. I like it, but I didn't continue with it. I liked doing the test with her. It was okay. She didn't finish with all of the students so a lot of them don't have the books, the SOI, they didn't do the test because she didn't come back. After going through the test and knowing what you needed to work on, it got easier. It was more fun. (M4).

She (SOI instructor) helped us before, from February, then her son's case was tagging her along so she didn't really end our....closure or whatever. But I've been doing books from Rob(another SOI instructor)....I felt lost so I've been asking Rob for books like that...(Y).

Another student enjoyed the test, but he felt that it did not correctly reflect his reading ability.

Oh, that (SOI test) was great. It had its point where it wasn't even true. Didn't even seem true, the parts where it said about reading, you know. It was really kind of silly. I love reading...I love looking at new words and trying new word forms, whatever, and just pushing myself for hard words (M).

One student resented the fact that everything on the test had a time limit, and she did not like the math questions.

...a little difficult because you only had so much time to do it, and she was always rushing me, too, and I couldn't think. I couldn't think about what to do. With my math, it's only add and take away. That's all I can do. I can't do division or fractions or algebra.....(C).

Students generally enjoyed the activities in the educational sensory integration gym, but they felt that the group just drifted away from going to the gym regularly.

I don't go in the brain gym. Just when we first started, it used to be the whole class that went in, and then we just drifted from it.it was fun!like ten or fifteen minute workout or whatever.....but I didn't know there was such a thing like that, eh, like exercise relaxes your brain.(Y).

...that (the gym) was really something else. It really got the group laughing. As a group, it's fun: individually, it's kind of....challenging. It's different, you know, some people are uncoordinated. Even the people who are coordinated or balanced, they're even having a hard time doing certain things.We don't go now, maybe a couple of them off and on have been going in there when they feel troubled or really extra bored (M).

The students felt that the SOI and the sensory integration gym were valuable parts of the program, but they needed someone to take them fully through the process and give

them the proper booklets to work on and a schedule for the gym. Some of the students had no comments about SOI because they did not write the test before the instructor left.

Assisting in the Community

During the program, the group was asked to participate in activities around the community. The main activities that they participated in were the elders' luncheons, which were held monthly, and the community cooking for evacuees and clean-up after the extensive flood in the fall of 2003. Occasionally they were asked to assist with other activities such as setting up the hall or the school gym for functions, and drumming and singing for various gatherings. Some students felt that assisting in the community was a very worthwhile part of the program.

We did the elders luncheon every month.....we would help cook.....
We would stay and help clean up and we would play games... We met all
the elder and some of them talked to us in ucwalmicwts...(Y)

Yeah, that was a valuable part, especially for the elders. They looked up
to us, like, are you going to be there next time? (M)

Students mentioned that the occasions when the Lil'wat Culture and History group assisted with Elders' dinner were enthusiastically attended at first, and the students would make gifts of food or crafts for each elder, but after a few sessions, students lost interest.

That (helping with the elders' dinners) was really good at first then people started to get disinterested. You know, only certain few people show up. people going here, people going there, and people sitting in the classroom, maybe two or three people helping with the elders (M).

...for the ones with principles it was good. Some they try to slough off....It was good cooking for the elders, catching fish and barbequing it down by the river (H).

We gave it (moose meat) to the elders for a gathering, for their dinners. We wanted to give them something every month for their dinners, but that

didn't work out either. The first two dinners we gave paddles, and we gave cedar broaches that we made, put together. But it never kept up (M4).

We went down to the riverside and made a whole bunch of t'aqsa7 (barbecued fish) for the elders. We gave a lot out too, that was nice too. That was excellent. It put a big smile on their faces when we gave them that fish (R).

Respect for the elders and desire to learn from them is evident throughout conversations with the students. One student describes the traditional way of learning from an elder.

...their (the elders) input comes from way back, and it's not written. It's coming from here (point to his heart)...If they (students) are interested in learning, it'll make more of an impression coming from an elder than a younger person....All the artisans in the olden days, they had their own apprenticeship thing going. ...they took a core group that they took, and they taught those and those ones became the teachers to the rest. They took their own apprentices and showed them...it wasn't a classroom setting. Our culture and history didn't happen in the classroom (H).

There were two very different views of other kinds of community service that the students were asked to participate in. Some resented it, others felt it was a valuable part of the traditional ways of the Lil'wat people, and one student felt that the group did not live up to its commitment to the community.

...even before the flood, it was always clean up, organize this place, organize that place. They're having a meeting up at the school so we had to go set up chairs. They're having a ceremony up at the school, and that's all I felt like we were just labourers..what was the purpose of setting up the hall when for culture and history we were just sitting there doing cedar bark work and cedar roots (M4).

Get your hands dirty, get tired.like the old days when people used to do things together and for each other. ...the old hall is the last vestige of communal sharing and work, eh. That and the race track and the rodeo grounds. Without compense, but food and companionship, and good feeling, you know, helped with something. ...The last big volunteer effort....the women cooked and the men went and ate, lunchtime, supper,

breakfast, til it was done. All on the word of the chief, eh. “We’re going to build ourselves a bighouse”, and then it came about (H).

...that we all said that we are going to help out the community in any which way they need help and we committed ourselves and that didn’t happen. Just only a few of us. get to go and do that now ... and our whole class already committed saying that we are going to do it as a team (B).

One student talked about the traditional responsibilities of everyone to look after the others in the community using fishing as an example, and how he sees that this has changed in the Mount Currie community.

It was..... my job was just to carry the salmon, catch the salmon and bring it to the people. That’s what I mean about the care of the people is that they all went and caught salmon and they went and brought it to all the people to make sure that they all had something hanging in their sheds for the wintertime. And now they just select who they are going to help. I need that to change, that part everyone needs to get back toyou don’t have to hate someone to feed them They need to be fed and kept healthy. That’s what I believe. The hate shouldn’t be there but it still is (B).

Another student stressed the need to get out of the classroom and out into the community to find out what needs to be done and help with it.

...how do you find out what the community needs if we don’t go out there and find out? How can we find it on the chalkboard in our classroom or a phone call. We don’t need the phone call. We can just go out there (B).

Traditional Skills and Knowledge

In our Native heritage, learning and living were the same thing, and knowledge, judgment, and skill could never be separated (Watt-Cloutier, 2000,p.118).

The main focus of the program was learning the traditional skills of the Lil’wat people. For purposes of this research, the analysis of the interviews resulted in so much information about this section of the program that it had to be divided into five sections:

traditional skills and knowledge students brought to the program, what they learned in the program, language, s7istken, and what the students would still like to learn.

Prior Traditional Knowledge

All of the students came to the program with some traditional skills and knowledge, and shared these to varying degrees with the other participants. Some had acquired the skills and knowledge from family as part of growing up and participating in community activities:

Drum making, singing, You know, I was raised with it, eh, the singing, my father and my grandfather .being a hereditary chief. I learned the language. Traditional culture has always been the singing and the songs.....my grandfather always had gatherings (H).

My grandmother taught me (to fish). I just learned by watching. I grew up at the lake with my grandparents. I learned how to check the net (M).

He (my dad) was teaching me a little bit...to pick wild celery and onions, h  kwa7, ...it's just a plant that you can eat. It's all bitter. My dad taught me something....sasquatch stories! (Laughs and swears) He was telling us that at the camp we had. Scared the hell out of me! I didn't want to go to sleep! (C).

It's always been a way of life for me. After, what is it 8 , 9 years ago when I started working with cedar bark, and I've always wanted to learn more. ..I made it a goal for myself. I taught myself how to bead..started with that first, then bone beads, then dreamcatchers, and the list got bigger and bigger (M4).

One student shares some personal history

....My dad followed the work, eh. So we traveled all over like we lived here, lived there. I was born down here, but the road runs right over where the house used to be where I was born. The highway runs right over where I was born ___years ago (number left out to protect the participant's identity) (H).

One student uses anecdotes to share his traditional knowledge.

I did find out I was a Native person, so I was going home "Mom, I want to be an Indian, so I want to eat Indian food." Meanwhile I was already

eating preserves and ts'wan and fish heads. It was already part of my life...and I was going to pick my hákwa7 and xúsum and wild strawberries which was all part of my life because in my heart I know when they're ripe. They keep "Come on. I'm ready now", so I get up and get the buckets or my pack sack and go pick it, you know. The people ask me "How do you know?" and I says.....I justfeel it. I can' explain it. ...I feel it and I have to go. I can't just sit there and wonder if I should go and see if they're ripe or not when already the energy is pulling me there (B).

In another story, he tells how he taught young people at a camp about picking berries.

They (the young people) thought it was a job to go pick a berry. They run into stinging nettles and all that, and I told them No, don't think of it like that. You are trying to get that ripe thing on there. You know, If you think like a bear, and how does he look in the bushes, how do you see him going through the bushes (makes a sweeping arm movement with one arm). They go like this with their arm and see all the berries popped up. He pushed away the stinging nettles with his arm. You pick, put those in the bucket. This arm's going to get all stingy, but it's only one arm, not all your body. That arm can take it all, and you go to the next bush and do the same. At the end of the day, you see all your work, your canning and you say, "I'll remember this. Hey, that's a good pain." (B).

The same student talks about his disappointment when he finds out that the youth do not have the traditional knowledge that he expected. This brings up the issue of how the knowledge is passed down to the younger generation in these days.

I am Native and I've got to go all the way and live it and show it to people that don't know it. Because I took it for granted, especially when I was telling you about the camp we had with youth, that I expected them to know all our ways of life and how to go pick, and that kicked me in the heart, too, knowing that they don't know. Their parents didn't even show them (B).

This is just a small sample of the traditional skills and knowledge that the students had before the course started. Documenting their true knowledge of the history, the cultural teachings, the traditional foods, spirituality, etc., would be a separate paper.

Traditional Skills and Knowledge Learned in the Lil'wat Culture and History Program

The original goals of the program were to focus on learning four things: cedar work using the roots and inner cedar bark, food gathering and preservation, building a traditional pit house (s7ístken), and ucwalmícwts (to speak the traditional Lil'wat language). Language and s7ístken are dealt with in separate sections. The students describe what they have learned about working with cedar and preserving food, as well as other skills such as drum making.

The inner bark work is really great. I have a good idea how to work with that now. Somebody in the classroom knows how to do it alreadyshared it (M).

The cedar roots, and picking the grass and cherry bark, I learned all that last year too. My first time.....I did the bottom part that's it, the bottom part of the basket. I was just learning how to strip the bark yet, I mean the roots, to make them real long (M4).

We had people come in ____ helped us with the basket making along with _____. They helped us go and get the cedar and the roots.... There are a few things I made, but I don't, ...I don't think I have the patience enough... (Y).

I learned lots by ...just by doing it. Just by doing and not choosing what I wanted to learn. I just did what was there (B).

We made rattles. They were nice (R).

Food preservation was an important part of the program, and although some non-traditional methods of preserving such as canning and freezing were used, the idea that you gather food and put it away for winter is traditional.

We learned how to do the moose meat, the canned moose meat. First time I ever did that. It was good (M4).

...making the barbequed fish, eh, t'áqsa7, and putting it away, and putting fish in the freezer. We put a lot of fish away, too, for the elders. We caught a lot of fish and cut it up (R).

.....I just caught the salmon, but I learned how to do the barbeque (M)

Once you make the t'áqsa7, the barbeque salmon, and then we take it off the stick. And if we don't want to eat that part we just hang it on the screen above the stove and let it dry...that's just awesome when you make a soup out of it after. (B).

We have our own and it's called smoked salmon or ts'wan. We have big sheds and lots of racks, but they make the fish thinner, they trim it and they hang the strips too. They have a smoke fire underneath it, not a hot fire just a smoke fire, just to keep the bees and flies away so it get wormed out (B).

we learned how to do the moose meat, the canned moose meat. First time I ever did that. It was good. We gave it to the elders or a gathering, for their dinners (M4).

We ... all went out as a group and picked berries, which was fun. We picked huckleberries...and we picked xúsum (soapberries). We didn't fix it as a group, we did it at home I got ... three jars done...(M4)

One traditional skill that was not on the original list but became a meaningful part of the program for many students was drum making.

I learned how to make a drum....some of the classmates already knew ...not me. I glued the frame together, sanded it, and _____ helped me put the skin on, the hide. (Y).

I never did know anything about it (drum making), and now it's just.... just like I was born with it, you know. People were talking about deer hides, and then one of the classmates just took the time to go out there and throw some in a bucket and I just followed through I just watched and learned (M).

...making drums. That was different for me. First time I ever made a drum. Getting the wood and asking someone to borrow their saw, to cut it up for us. That was different. It felt good, too (R).

...I never made my own drum yet. I have made those drum frames in there, and so I've been...did the hide part or the lacing, but I've learned that part now and I'm eager to get that done now because that was one of the fears....I wonder if I should just nail the hide on the frame or lace it with sinew, eh, and I was told that sinew is better because you can change

that and you can't change the nails They will rust on there and break the board or whatever. That's what I learned about that (B).

An issue that arose relating to traditional knowledge was that of receiving pay for learning the traditional ways. One student says that her father quit the program for that reason, but another student doesn't see the problem with receiving pay for learning culture and history.

I guess he didn't want to be paid for what he knows.
Because he knows everything. Well, not everything, but
most ##### herbs, teas, medicines...(C).

There's lots out there that want to be part of the program. That said they wouldn't mind being here. "I would love to be getting paid for learning my culture" (H).

Another related issue that emerged was the ethics of selling traditional crafts, particularly when the one who is teaching you supplements her income by selling a particular item.

Somebody in the classroom knows how to do it (cedar bark work) already.....shared it. It's sort of like she didn't want to because that's how she makes her money ...I know I made a couple of roses, and right away at the top of her mind she's thinking oh no I bet he's going to sell it. She's saying "Don't abuse it, don't abuse it", but I already know, it's not none of my business what she does, but she's telling me not to and there she is right there. So I says, "I know I might be taking your business, but I not selling it. I'm giving it away." (M).

S7istken (Traditional Pit House)

One of the activities in the first summer of the program was to build a pit house for display at the annual Whistler Weetama Festival (a First Nations cultural festival which was designed to showcase First Nations culture, build awareness of First Nations issues, and, through youth training, build the tourism capacity of First Nations in this area). Because they couldn't dig holes in the resort community, the students built what

an s'7istken would look like above the ground using modern tools. Their plan was to eventually erect the structure over a traditional pit in Mount Currie. One student describes the feelings of pride that building the s'7istken brought out in the group:

There was happening days (building the s'7istken) and everybody was together. We were singing. We do three or four songs in the morning when we get there, and three or four songs when we leave. Then everybody was just so proud when it was done. We had pictures taken around the whole thing. It was just, you know, you could feel the tears, see the tears in a couple of women's eyes. I was breathing hard even. I had to take a breath, and said "Wow!" This is us. This is how we should be, happy go lucky, helping each other out (M).

Other students acknowledged the positives in building the s'7istken, yet they saw problems as well.

That (building the s'7istken) was nice, but when we got the supplies, we only had about two weeks to get it up there(R).

Built an s'7istken once, that was up in Whistler. Hard work. It was sort of interesting, but hard work. I had to work on the bloody weekend too. Took us a week and a half to put it up and it took one day to take it down. Well, we weren't supposed to dig the ground up in Whistler, so we had to put it above. Normally they would be underground (C).

That s'7istken, I guess, kinda brought everybody together....The most mitigating factor was the lack of equipment and communication. I brought my tools to be used in Whistler. They (management) said "Don't use your own tools, don't use your own tools." But if I didn't bring my saw in there, it wouldn't have got done. If I didn't bring my cord, my extension, my saws, my hammer, it wouldn't have got done (H).

Students enjoyed the planning of the s'7istken, and would have like to put it up in Mount Currie somewhere after the Whistler festival was over. There was a problem with available land to erect the s'7istken and students were disappointed and some lost interest.

That (finding a place to dig the base and erect the s'7istken) would be nice, but....it's another land issue. Nobody wants to give up land. There was some classmates that were saying that we could use their back yard, but if we opened it to the public, are they still going to want us? And we wanted it for public use (Y).

I just want to put it (the s7istken) up somewhere where people can see it or make use of it. ...someplace close to the community like even by the ballfield somewhere there where it would be easy to dig in the ground.What I could picture is an elder teaching inside one of those things....the one I had pictured was wheelchair accessible, you know, with a little stage and with little bleachers, and kids standing around with an elder teaching or talking. That was my vision of an s7istken (M).

There's no place on the reserve to put an s7istken....There's no place on the reserve to put an s7istken.....That's why it is still sitting there. We got no place to put it up. Now we get frowned on, eh, get it out of here, we don't want it here, but there's no place to put it up. That's sad (H).

One of the students, a young girl, C, feels that she cannot learn, and that people have to have great patience to even try to teach her. She demonstrated her knowledge when we were discussing the s7istken by drawing a picture of a traditional winter pit house, and describing in great detail, not only the s7istken, but other types of housing used in summer by the Lil'wat and other nations, lean-to's and teepees.

Other students had suggestions about putting the s7istken at the community school, or down by the lake, to teach the young people. They wanted to dig it into the ground the way it was traditionally, and put the shell they had built in Whistler on top. At the end of the program, the shell was outside the back door of the classroom.

Learning the Lil'wat Language (Ucwalmícwts)

Language is our unique relationship to the creator, our attitudes, beliefs, values, and fundamental notions of what is truth. Our languages are the cornerstone of who we are as a people. Without our languages our cultures cannot survive.

(Quoted in Fettes and Norton, 2000, p. 29).

This statement is one of the principles for revitalization of First Nations languages set out by the Assembly of First Nations in 1990, and it emphasizes the urgency of maintaining the traditional languages. Although learning the language was very important

to all of the program participants, and learning the language was one of the four chosen topics at the beginning of the program, very little language learning was done in the program for a variety of reasons. Some felt the group didn't make the effort, and others felt ridiculed for trying to learn so they stopped. Some blamed lack of resources and equipment, and others felt the supervisor, who knew the language, didn't share as much as he could have.

It's like hardly any of us know the language...that was my main concern when we started this program....and we hardly made an effort. Maybe we were supposed to learn a word a day or something, but, you know, it wasn't really there (M).

I'd like to be able to communicate more in a conversation because when I did try and learn the language and when I did try and speak it, they laughed at me, so I ended up with a block in my subconscious...so it's funny for me to try and speak my language (B).

....I did flash cards (for the language) and they are just sitting on the shelf. I mean, like, we didn't even.....they made kind of fun of me at first because I was making flash cards (Y).

I already knew some from high school. We took Indian language classes...._____was supposed to help teach....because he knows it, too, instead of asking somebody else to come in. He was right in with our group. But, we never go around to it, eh. He was willing to teach it,He gave a tape to _____ or somebody. She was supposed to copy it or something, and he never got it back (R).

He was (sharing the language) a little bit, not as much as....it would have been good a little bit more.. We needed a better effort for tape recording. We didn't have the right equipment, like camcorders, or recording equipment....(M).

One of the students said that learning the language would be far too hard for her, and then, she started reciting Lil'wat words she had already learned.

Holy ____ that would be hard 'cause I wouldn't be able to understand what they are saying that's why. Well, I know some things.. This (pointing to her hair) is maqin, that's hair, and skwakst is hand. I don't know if nkwt'usten is eyes or eyebrows. I know some of them but I don't know

much. I know some of the colours,.....animals,....numbers I know up to ten (C).

There is some controversy in the community about which version of the Lil'wat language is correct, the version described in Jan van Eijk's 1997 book, The Lillooet language or the slightly different version spoken by some of the people in the community. The program supervisor talks about his view.

As far as the written things, I had to try to force myself to learn how to write it so I could read it, and the more I looked into it, the less I liked it because I saw mistakes in the translation. There were some of his translators who themselves might be proficient in (the language) but lacking in English, so translations get lost in the process. ...So stuff I see in the book I disagree with, because being good at English and knowing somewhat our (language), hey, I can see discrepancies (H).

The supervisor also had strong feelings about the commitment of the students in the group and their fear of making mistakes when it came to learning the language, and the frustration is evident in his words. He also talks about how it would be different learning language from the elders in the old way.

...with willing participants they wouldn't be scared to try the gutturals and stuff, eh. They want to hear you talk it, but they don't want to try. This bunch, you know, it seemed like to me anyway. They took pride in trivial things, rather than making an honest effort. Like, *all ha*, that's all I hear for about four months last year. *Ao7* means no in our language, and *all*. They threw them all together; they found a white man word that fit in with an Indian word *all ao7*. That was their big accomplishment....and they were scared to try others (H).

Listening to the elder, then okay you say it now, or you try it, and because of the small group setting learning before, there was no put down there was no apprehension being in front of 30 people and maybe making a mistake. In a small group setting, you make a mistake and somebody is going to correct you, and invariably you aren't put down. You're corrected but you aren't put down (H).

One student spoke about the concept of generosity with your time and knowledge and expressed this in Lil'wat language.

My great grandmother was telling me *cw7aoz kwesu sp'xal*it means don't be stingy in our language. .and to me, to our people it means a lot. That word, those words, to me, my grandmother was telling me don't be stingy with myself. When people ask for my help, you go and do it because they need your help now, and you don't ask them ... how much are you going to pay me, or why. You don't do that. You just do it because some day along the line, you'll need their help, and they'll say "Yeah, whatever you need done." (B).

What the Students Would Still Like to Learn

The students had many ideas about what traditional Lil'wat skills and knowledge they would still like to learn, and what they might do with their new knowledge in the future. Learning the language is still a very important goal.

...the traditional way (of making drum frames) where they used to get it from the vine maple and then bend it, steam bend it. ... I want to try it. I want to make old fish traps. I want to even make my own display, you know, have my own little museum thing (M).

I'm still learning the language yet. Actually I find it easier just to go visit them, the elders, rather than have them come over. They'll say something in Ucwalmicwts to us and we'll answer, and they'll correct us in some things.it's better learned out there. There's no real school structure for the language in what you are doing (M4).

Just the ucwalmicwts. More of that anyway (R).

I learned to check the net. I don't know how to make a net, though. But then, I should have known by now, but I want to learn. There's still time to. The traditional way I'd really like to learn. Find somebody that really knows, and sit down and teach me, you know. Then, I'll be able to teach someone else later. My grandmother does that, certain size, a trout net even (M).

Part B: More Categories Emerging from the Data

During the analysis of the data, many other categories which did not involve the program components emerged: problems with group cohesion, leadership and management, students who left the program, education and learning, wisdom to live by, parenting, religion, family and personal, transforming negative life styles, suggestions for improving the program, changes in the lives of the students, thoughts about the end of the program, and stories

Problems with Group Cohesion, Leadership and Management

These topics concerned the many aspects of program management including how the group got along together, who was chosen as the leader and how he led, and what was the relationship with the management person who oversaw the program for the Mount Currie Band. The group experienced some set-backs or negativity due to interpersonal and family conflicts, lack of motivation, and leadership and management issues. All of these were interrelated and affected the learning process.

Group Cohesion Issues

Some of the issues were very personal:

One time I had a big fight with _____ and _____ (other students). So since that time she had been giving me evil looks. They did, they both do. That's why I don't enjoy it no more. It's hard to enjoy when somebody there is getting crabby (C).

Yes, and I wanted to instill it (the knowledge I have) in the classmates that were in there, too, to help them out. Along the way it became a real big challenge because some of them were not allowed to learn from us even though that's what we signed a contract about. It was a family thing. I think only one member of a family should be allowed to take the program (B).

Again, a lot of them in there, they think to themselves too much, too, and it's not good. You know, well he's there, so I'm not going to go.

Couldn't release what they had here (puts fist over heart) to open themselves to the job. That's why when I go back there, they'll be looking down on each other. There's no more looking each other in the eye. Looking down, calling you down. There's no trust. There came to be no trust (H).

Every student interviewed talked about the lack of motivation and how the group moved from doing things together as a group, to working separately, each doing his or her own project. Many expressed pain or disappointment because of this.

That's what I do (go and pick the traditional foods), you know, but they (the other students) choose to sit there. You know, that's what hurts my heart, that they don't want to go out and pick. Like I got my early *hakwa* already....but I need them to feel that energy, too, and get up and go. Stinging nettles need to be picked right now, and the mint and the raspberry leaves and the red flowering current (B).

...the group effort wasn't there. Uh, I don't know, maybe....no more interest, that's all. You know, people wanted to do their own thing. We all had ideas, but nobody wanted to follow each other's ideas (M).

After that *s7istken* and the fishing trip, eh, the excuses started to pull in. Oh, it all came together. The fishingand the *xúsum* was in June, July. That's when the excuses started coming to the forefront. Too hot, scared of snakes, too wet, don't have shoes, don't have lunch. Our people didn't....that wasn't part of our life, eh. ...When the time was right, you were out there (H).

I tried to get them to work at the things that I knew how to do, and it was like pulling teeth with some of them. _____ was a tough one to get going. She was mad all the time. She'd give up real easy (M4).

.....everybody is going to do their own thing right now, sort of thing, not doing it as a group. Just individually going out and doing whatever they want instead of working like one group as we are (R).

....everyone was complaining back and forth to the Band office because some of them were just sitting there doing nothing. I say the more you sit there, then you get nothing done. If you're not going to put any effort into trying, then, you know, you're getting paid to learn your own culture, and I said you guys should be working hard at it, now just sitting around doing nothing

...I always find something to do, and then I found it easier to be out of the room if all they were going to do was sit there and do nothing. (M4).

....I was talking to ____ and I was going to ask her to teach....me again, but she said "No, I'm not into it right now."

Me, I don't think I was here most of the time. I missed quite a bit. (Y).

...there's a lot of things we never did, just a lot of us were doing arts and crafts, you know, we were selling them or trading them, or just giving them away. You know, we were just thinking or ourselves...not the group effort things.

Yeah, I got discouraged with trying things because maybe the group effort wasn't there, ever since ____ (the life skills coach) left I think...

(about the s7istken) I made a couple of efforts to go see land management, but I had no back up from the classroom, you know, and then every time I try to take control, and people say "Oh, you're no leader" or something. I felt ##### (swearing) but I'm making an effort to keep the program going, keep the attitudes positive instead of sitting there kind of sulking at each other (M).

It's been challenging because all there other guys that are trying to heal, too, their negative energy is still more powerful for them yet, and I'm still with them yet, keeping them positive, but they still keep in their energy, the negative crutch is still there (B).

To add to the tension between the members of the group, there seemed to be an ongoing battle over the sign in sheet with people signing in and others crossing their names out. This added to the negative feelings in the group.

....about our time sheet, people showing up late, but putting 9 o'clock, or people saying "Oh, I'm going to do this today" or "I'm going to do that.", then they signed the whole sheet all day.I was out in the community helping, but then they didn't believe me and they marked the time right out! That was one of the things, too, people messing with the times. People trying to be...I don't know...we never had a supervisor, but they're trying to take it in their own hands about the time (M).

.... they still crossed my name off. They're still doing that. They still cross my name off. They did that for all this past week, Monday to Wednesday (C).

One student suggests that it is not just this group, but the whole society these days, that has a problem with doing well on the job.

Such is the attitude of people now a days. No pride in workmanship. It is evident in a lot of things not just these guys. It's quite evident there's no pride among the workers now. Pride in paycheck, that's it (H).

The same student feels that this focus on paycheck rather than doing a good job may have started during his lifetime when a winterworks welfare for pay type of program was introduced in Mount Currie to replace the system of community members working together voluntarily to get things done in the community.

After that (the cooperative system of helping), the payment system, they introduced winterworks. A single man worked two and a half days, four days, and a married man worked 10 days. Their sale kit is to raise your self esteem. You work for a bit of your welfare (laughs) (H).

I feel that the number of responses concerning negativity within the group was due in part to the fact that these students did not have a way to release their feelings during the program, and, for some, this was the first time they could talk openly about their negative experiences and feelings. There were, as well, positive comments about the fun they had together, gaining new friends, and the support that students felt from each other.

I've really wanted to quit drinking since this program started last year. I attempted once, maybe a month, month and a half, I quit drinking, I felt so good.. The class was proud of me. I felt that they cared for me, somebody cared for me. And that's how the group used to be, you know, in a way I still do, because when we're together people laugh and stuff...(M).

Management Issues

By management, I am referring to the Mount Currie Employment Centre staff, all Band members, who had the responsibility of implementing and managing the program. A variety of issues emerged concerning management. First, there seemed to be some misunderstanding among the students as to what they could keep of the crafts they

produced, and what belonged to the program. This confusion created difficulties in the program.

What turned everybody off, most of them, I should say, off, was the fact that everything we made we had to leave here. We were supposed to leave it with the school, but no one has. Everyone has taken it (crafts they made) home, sold it, gave it away or something. We were supposed to leave our work here, or make one of each that what we know, and they want a piece of everything we've made. And no one liked that idea. Our drums have to go back, that we made...so I've got a few things to catch up on (M4).

The baskets...one thing that stopped us, we were told that we couldn't keep anything we made, and then, that put a damper right there. You could just.....the enthusiasm just went sssssssssss(makes a motion with his hand going down). Why should we bother making anything when we can't keep it? You should be able to keep at least half of what you make. If you are going to make a bowl, okay, then make that bowl, then make one for yourself. If you make a hat, make one for yourself.....then, make one for the project so they have something to show for it in the end as well, so you all gain and everybody is happy (H).

We get to keep half, and give half back and keep it in the class (R).

I felt a little jealousy because I was the only one making drums. But, then I said hey, I'm learning and earning. That's why we're sort of here. Sure we're supposed to have some for the display, but I feel we don't trust that too, we feel that the band is going to take advantage of whatever we make and they're going to sell it for themselves. Or stuff like that, I mean, like the whole community seems to be that way towards each other. Yeah, not trustworthy anymore with each other (M).

The other management concerns that came up for the students were around support and trust. One student felt that those in charge of the program should be visible and show interest in the program on a regular basis, so they could support the positive things in the program rather than always dealing with the negatives, and another felt that the group had been abandoned by management.

We need that leadership (management) where they are ready to support us. Come in and say "Hi, what are you guys learning now?" Or "What's up on the wall now?" Like that, instead of saying you're doing this,

you're doing that, you know, pointing, you know (points his finger in a scolding manner). That put them (the students) back in the shell (B).

I didn't really like being left. Like we were just put there, and the people that put us up hardly even checked on us. One of the workers, she used to come, but now she doesn't because she took time off or something (Y).

Another problem that emerged was that some students would go to the Band office and talk to the management of the program about problems happening within the program, and this made students distrust each other, and distrust management.

...everybody was complaining back and forth to the Band office because some of them were just sitting there doing nothing (M4)

...I wanted to complain, but then I felt that it might have backfired and I might have been the one getting fired, or I might make matters escalate, and get worse...maybe it would have been my fault breaking the group up, or that's the way I felt so I just kept it to myself (M).

They had spies in our classroom, so that's why they were looking down when I started coming in, too, and that further undermined everything. You didn't know who to trust anymore. We were just told there's a spy in here, so any trust that had been built up, it just went out the door. ...we were judged by the actions of a few, you know. We were all thrown in the same cardboard box and all treated the same and we weren't the same (H).

One student was very angry about not being allowed to do some cultural things such as building an s7istken at Melvin Creek (a protest camp about 40 minutes from Mount Currie), and another student felt that the lack of cultural knowledge by the management led to poor organization.

....building an s7istken in Melvin Creek wasn't cultural enough. That's what she (the manager) says. Dumb. Help build an s7istken in Melvin Creek, but she wouldn't let us go. Only the one in Whistler we had to build (C).

....They're lacking in cultural and history knowledge themselves, you know, they didn't know how to approach it. We're allowed to practice our culture and history as long as we do it by white man rules (H).

Some students liked having a schedule set up with people coming in, rather than having to go find the people on their own and have them approved to come in a teach a specific thing.

When it (the program) first started, I thought somebody would be here supervising us, you know, and showing us how to do things, only to find out we had to go out and find the people and get them approved from our boss. It was hard all round trying to get someone in here. It was. They didn't have enough people to facilitate and it seemed that we weren't organized (M4).

Another issue that emerged was that the conflict with management affected the learning process of the students when the elders came in to teach.

some of them (elders) were trying to be here, but like the falling apart of the group. The attention span was gone, the eagerness was gone of wanting to learn because of the way the bosses treated us (B).

Leadership Within the Program

Leadership within the program was also a topic that came out of the data. It was unclear from the data whether the students had been told ahead of time that one particular student would be their supervisor. He understood that he would be an instructor, not a student, but the other students seemed to feel he was one of them and shouldn't be supervisor. His job description was also unclear from the data.

I think we needed a....better supervisor. I just about quit right there and then when it was a classmate.
....I think we sort of got left on our own or something. Even though we had a supervisor, but our supervisor sort of drained out on us three months or so....sort of went his own way, wasn't getting his own way (Y).

As for our boss, I guess you can say, our group, it could have been somebody with more, you know, um can tell us, cause the group sort of split up there. Leadership, eh, leadership.No, no, no, that's one thing with a supervisor. He's not there to tell everybody what to do. You know, he just goes out on his own business (R).

It's like we have an elder in the classroom, but he only limits himself to so much and he has all that knowledge and he doesn't want to share it sort of thing. Like an attitude, You're a waste of time, or you'll never learn...It's like he only trusts a few people in his little circle sort of thing (M).

....and somebody that's more outspoken being the leader, so we can all work as one group, not being individual by ourself (R).

Some students thought that the life skills coach would be with them throughout the program as a supervisor, and they were upset when she left for a family event and didn't return.

She (the life skills coach) abandoned us, too.....After life skills she quit,...quit teaching us. Yep, she was going to come back, but they didn't hire her back. ... I don't think she should have left us because if she was still here everything would still be in order (C).

.....and _____(life skills coach). We didn't know she quit. It seemed like she was forced out by the bosses. That's what the guys used for a crutch after because they thought that she was going to be our supervisor, too, the way she led us on and made us believe in her, and then she was gone. There was nobody else for these other guys.... She couldn't hang around because she had her own world to go to and that's what our gang didn't understand, eh.(B).

She would have knew everybody who was there and what time. And she was like a teacher, so she would like, oh M is present and put the time he was there. No problem. It's not like we were being babysat, but it would have worked out better (M).

That crutch of saying somebody (the life skills coach) said this and she quit, so I don't have to listen to anybody else anymore (B).

The supervisor, who also had extensive knowledge of the culture and the language, explains that he got discouraged and gave up because people didn't seem interested, and he didn't really know if he was expected to be a supervisor or an instructor.

Well, I was supposed to be just a supervisor, and I kind of got thrown into the instructor category, and they pay their instructors 2 ½ times what

they're paying me. And some of them (the students) looked down on me because I was part of them, that I was a student, not a teacher, you know. So there was renegadism right from the start (H).

I just came to it after that I don't give a damn....I'm not an instructor, I'm just a supervisor.because the lack of participation...and effort, more or less. Lack of patience. They come in for two minutes, "Oh, there's nobody here. I'm going to do this and that". There was no togetherness, no trust, communication and trust.....if you had the willing participants and you said "We're going to do this today" and they just done it. ...If the interest was there then the togetherness would have to be part of it. because you can't work alone (the discouragement was obvious in his voice as he spoke) (H).

if you had the willing participants and you said "We're going to do this today" and they just done it. ...If the interest was there then the togetherness would have to be part of it (H).

Some students were very clear about wanting, or needing, an instructor to keep the group together and give direction.

Better supervision.That was the main thing. Like we were a bunch of big kids on our own. Do what we want. Like I even fell asleep under my table. It reminded me of grade 3 or 4. They're wondering where I'm at and I'm sleeping under the desk or something, wake up at lunch time. Oh lunchtime! Sort of things like that, sort of taking advantage of the system (M).

Me, I need a teacher every step of the way, and there is a few of us in here like that.....today, in my class, I come late and there's nobody there to give me heck. "Why are you just now getting here?" Yeah, I want someone to give me heck and be there at 9 o'clock (Y).

One student, however, felt that it would have been a very good thing if they could have supervised themselves without any problems.

But in a way, it would have been better if we could have done it on our own. Supervise ourselves without no problems, you know, no attitudes (M).

Students Who Left the Program

Several students dropped out of the program for various reasons, some early in the program and some over half-way through. There was some confusion over whether the students left because they wanted to or were asked to leave by management. The remaining students discussed why they thought the others left:

..They weren't pushed out. They were just....they weren't morning people like, you know, getting up early to make it to class, so they just figured that they were kicked out. But they heard the wrong word that they were kicked out. They just had to come back and they would have been welcomed back, you know, back in class. They just decided to stay away (R).

...even though they (management) said that we weren't going to chase anybody away, they did that before we even started on the money program, or when we started getting paid. We figured they (the other students) were holding us back, because we waited for them and then we waited and waited and they (management) finally let them go because they weren't attending and their attendance was getting out of hand (Y).

(when asked why he thinks the others dropped out)
Alcoholism, just afraid of opening up, attitudes towards each other..... this person doesn't like that person, or just group things that they're shy of doing, stuff like that. Scared of opening up and showing who you really are or who you really could be(M).

They couldn't give of themselves. They couldn't try, I guess ..(H).

(when asked about a particular student who dropped out after being very active and trying to organize activities and projects for the group)
I think he just got discouraged. He had too much fire for the rest in there. And again he was a bit too assertive, you know, pushing too far. Yeah, with the right approach, he could have, it could have worked out good, but his presentation was a bit too much (H).

Education and Learning

Prior education

One student talks about starting school in Mount Currie before he was actually old enough, and it helped him later in his schooling. The same student tells about his unique experience going to Capilano College when it was a series of campuses throughout North Vancouver.

I kind of had an edge. There was no nursery, kindergarten, stuff, we started in grade 1. I had a pension for going to school and I pestered my mother and father to go to school here, in 1949, which made me 5 years old. So they (the school administration) said, "Okay, let him go. He'll soon tire of it and want to stay home." But I didn't tire of it, I stayed in. ... I didn't get no report card, but I had done grade 1. So when they sent me to Mission (St. Mary's Residential School), I was that much more ahead of my classmates. I knew how to read... add... spell. I could write cat and dog and Dick and Jane and Sally, whatever all (H).

I completed my grade 12 through upgrading, Cap College when it first opened I went and got my grade 12. This was in North Vancouver. They had campuses all over the place ... It was all right because of the campuses being scattered all over the department paid for my taxi rides ... come out of class and call a cab jump in and go to the next class. Go over here for English, and come back here for art (H).

One student who attended the community school in Mount Currie had a very positive experience.

I had a great time (at the Xitolacw Community School), went to grade 12. It was all good (R).

One student had a good experience in the Mount Currie school, but when he transferred to Signal Hill School in Pemberton, he experienced racism and was made to feel inferior. His story is told in detail in the Transformation section of this paper.

...at that time when I was going to the Mount Currie Indian day school,. They made me want to learn and be smart...
...the real shocker is that even though I was going to church and going to school, getting smart and learning about their ways...and

integrating to Signal Hill for grade six....I found out that I was the worst colour person in the world (B).

One student talked about a particular subject, rather than the whole experience of school.

With my math it's only plus and take away. That's all I can do. I can't do division or fractions or algebra or fractions (C).

How People Learn and Teach

The students had many insights into how people learn, what is helpful and what is not in the learning process.

It (one student not wanting to try things) changed when I brought my daughter over. She had to see someone younger than her try and do something, and (my daughter) did quite a bit of stuff, so it got her (the program participant) motivated to get up and try (M4).

I realized that more mistakes that you make in your art work you will just correct it later. Not everything is going to be as good as you think it is going to be until you actually practice a bit more (M4).

I learned how to do the barbeque. The person that helped me was saying she was allergic to fish but we both did it. They asked us how many fish we cut, and we said, we don't know, we're just cutting. And that's how much energy we had. By being positive she lost that fear of being allergic, by realizing that she wasn't because it was just part of life to do. It's not a job. How are you going to eat if you don't cut it open? (B).

Somebody would have to have seriously a lot of patience to teach me something because once you tell me once you have to tell me a couple more time for me to get it (C).

An effective teacher explains things thoroughly, as one student explains.

She (Lorraine Hill, the drug and alcohol counselor) was good. I liked having her because she explained a lot of things that frustrated most people and kept them stuck in one spot (M4).

According to one student, there were various levels of either motivation to learn or ability to learn in the program. He also feels that students were afraid to try new things.

Well, there's learning, and there's going through the motions. They learned enough to say I know it, but that's as far as the progression got.

S (one of the students) is good.... I gave her an idea last year, and she took it and ran away with it. All from showing her two or three little things that I knew.. And the other ones are still struggling with the same problems as a year ago. They're still stuck. How do I do this? They're going through the motions with no progression. they can't see their mistake, and they can't overcome their impatience to perfect what they're supposed to be doing. Like I say, It's only yourself to whip into shape. If they can't do it, then they shouldn't be part of the program (H).

That's the apprehension of a big crowd situation. That would stifle some effort in some of them, ...scared to make a mistake. I heard that said daily. Scared to make a mistake so they don't even try. Rather than trying and learning from a mistake if they did make one, they don't even try at all (H).

Some of the student comments about learning reflect the traditional ways of learning of Lil'wat society, watching then doing, and participating in activities to learn.

I just followed through I just watch and learn. And that's how I learned, just watch and learn He told me a few things and then I went around the community asking different people how to cure a hide and stuff. (M).

my grandmother taught me. I just learned by watching. I grew up at the lake with my grandparents. I learned to check the net. (M).

Listening to the elder, then okay you say it now, or you try it, and because of the small group setting learning before, there was no put down there was no apprehension being in front of 30 people and maybe making a mistake. In a small group setting, you make a mistake and somebody is going to correct you. And invariably you aren't put down. You're corrected but you aren't put down (H).

One student who took on the job of teaching young people at a cultural camp in Mount Currie feels that it is the job of everyone in the community to teach the children.

The kids we had in the camp are saying Big One, Bird, where are you? Get us back to life. We're getting tired of this world again. We want back. So we're stepping up to do that (have the cultural camp this year). Even though the whole village should be doing this for them, not just select people. That's why I keep saying not just select people should be doing it. Everybody should be "I'll go do it. I'll show you how to do it. I know how to do this", instead of sitting back waiting to see what is next on TV and when's the Canucks going to get knocked out next (B).

One student expresses the desire to take up the challenge and teach some of the traditions to the young, and another one talks about the helping each other learn.

I'd like to teach kids about drums and net making and whatever I want to learn. I'd love to teach other people especially the younger generation, because I noticed that the drum making those kids are really happy; they're proud of their drum, especially the teenager boys. You'd think they wouldn't want any part of this touching hide or scraping the slimy hide and stuff but they're all into it. Some of them are goofing around but that's just being a teenager (M).

I wanted to instill it in the class mates that we're in there, too, to help them out (B).

Residential School

Only one of the study participants had attended residential school. He worked in the barn at St. Mary's Residential School in Mission. Although he doesn't see it as negative, making a child get up at 4 in the morning to work in the barn and causing him to be late for class because of this work is really not appropriate if your goal is the education and well being of the child. It seems that this work took precedence over his school work, but he enjoyed the work and he values some of the habits he learned.

I learned to get things done fast because of the time slot I had ... Run in from the barnyard and class would be started. I'd have to work fast to catch up (H).

It wasn't all bad, it wasn't all good. There were low points. But like I said I enjoyed what I was doing working in the barn, silage, harvesting, and planting. The rest of the kids are out playing in the woods and everything, and I was working. That suited me just fine. It had no negative effect on me. It helped me more maybe in life, To this day I'm still up at 4 to in the morning. That was when I had to get up back then and start working in the barn.

Some of the students did not attend residential school, but have some knowledge of what it was like through people they know or their family members.

A few people in our group are part of that, too, that residential school. That is pretty wicked. I feel sorry for those people that went through that (R).

That (the power play) was the hardest thing. Some of it reminded me of my family. Family, alcohol, residential school, Catholic (C).

I never went to that school, but I feel all the pain that those guys went through. My wife went through that ...(B).

Wisdom to Live By

Some of the words of wisdom of the students were prescriptions for handling certain situations, such as taking responsibility for your own feelings when you think people are talking about you, or stopping negative behaviors when you are having to make excuses for things you do.

We're all "Oh they're saying this about me." I wish they would just stop doing that, If they're not doing anything wrong they shouldn't be worrying about what those other people are saying, or doing or thinking.. It's you that's thinking and it's you that's doing, ...not them.. They're not here holding your hand and bringing you to that bad spot. It's you. It's your own hand and your feet (B).

If you stayed away from that world (drinking and negative things) you wouldn't have to worry about trying to find explanations like you do every day. You know what you are doing already is the true way and you don't have to argue with anybody (B).

Other words of wisdom have to do with looking after the environment to keep the world healthy.

...what's alive out there that keeps us alive, I gotta keep that alive in a good way. We shouldn't have to be fighting over who owns it. We should be taking care of it so that everybody stays alive in the world. That's the way I feel (B).

If you want to stay alive, and if you know what part of life needs to be taken care, of that's our world. You go take care of it and make sure it stays alive. That's the water the air and the ground that keeps us alive and the vegetation and the fish and the birds, all the things that feed us that keep the whole world going, the whole cycle of the world going (B).

The way some elders feel about people who laze around is reflected in the following words of wisdom.

I'd say, don't be lazy around my grandma. She doesn't like it when you, I mean, she doesn't get angry or anything, but she notices when you're just sitting around and stuff. Keep busy and it makes her feel happy and then you'll feel happy because you accomplished something. Then you helped someone at the same time (M).

The value of apologizing after a disagreement as a way of letting go of the anger is presented by one student.

I was the one who apologized to her first. Well if I didn't apologize I would be holding on to that for the rest of my life. But now I think it hurts her more that it hurts me (C).

Parenting

The two pieces of advice about parenting that emerged from the data concerned looking at the good in each child, and teaching kids not to touch others' property.

...I that's what you've got to do with your kids, bring the good out in them. Stop thinking about what they did that happened a long time ago. Never mind that. Bring out the good and then they will do good things for you. Instead of you always saying "You did this. that's why I don't want to give you this." They end up a kid that just want to be bad (B).

I do that to my children. If it's not yours, don't take it or touch it. It's just only good that's all. Its not bossing around, just listen. It comes out that they'll blame you and you had it last and I don't want that word, blaming. I don't want you accused of anything. If you don't want to get into trouble, just don't do that stuff that's all. It's just respect for other people (B).

Religion

One student was very religious when he was younger, but found some things that contradicted the way he wanted to live as he got older.

I was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, I believed in God and Jesus and Mary and all these people and the apostles and all that, but along the way ...I finally learned what they were saying and they were saying that they were waiting for death to see if there was life after death, if there was hell or purgatory and heaven. And then that kicked my heart, and I'm saying why should I wait to die to see if there is life when I am alive now (B).

Sometimes, on isolated reserves, religious gatherings were held without a church or formal leader.

My grandfather's always had gatherings. There was no church, so he'd have prayer sermons down there in the evening (H).

Family and Personal

As students talked about the program, some of the issues that came up reminded them of issues in their personal lives. One student talks about the responsibility he had to look after 'life'. In one case it was protecting his brothers, and in the other, looking after his living children after others died.

I protected my 8 brothers from a lot of abuses that I've seen because I am the eldest. A lot of people say that I lost a childhood to looking after these brothers but I say "No". I was looking after life. I said my brothers, that was part of life. My parents said make sure they're not hungry and make sure that they are safe. That was my, I guess they call it job, but to me it was just part of life for me. Just do it ... That's why my brothers are so close to me. There's a connection, they care (B).

I met my family, my wife, had my children, I experienced death when I lost seven children. I got two children that are alive now, the eldest and the youngest, or no, my daughter's not the youngest. We lost our babies after her. But to me, I told my wife, you go ahead grieve for our babies. I can't cry, I gotta look after the ones that are alive eh, (crying) just the way I was brought up eh There's nothing I can do about deaths; It happened. Didn't want to be cold hearted, but I couldn't cry (B).

For another student, talking about being positive in his life brought up the issue of difficulties in his relationship, and he tries to work out the problem as he speaks.

I'm dragging her down, like I'm jealous for nothing, I'm insecure, like "Who are you with, who's there, who phoned ". Stuff like that. I never used to be like that. I feel sort of not as positive anymore, but I want to move on. I really care about this woman, but then again, in a way it seems jinxed. We always get arguing or something.. I don't know, I got to find that positiveness again somehow (M).

In another story of relationships, H tells me that working long hours, together with what he has said before about playing in a band on the weekends, over the years destroyed his relationship with his first wife.

Whenever I got home Sunday afternoon that was my weekend. That was the time I had to spend with my family. Workaholic. I was a workaholic. It cost me my first family Overtime, I loved overtime. One job there, every two weeks it was like I was getting a month and a half's pay with so much overtime. Money wasn't a problem, it was just lack of time together and lack of communication. That split us apart. She worked days and I was either swingshift or graveyard. I was swing shift for 7 years. I seen her a little bit that's all (H).

One student talks about using the negative things he has seen in his life, particularly around alcoholism and abuse, to help and protect his family, and how much the drum has helped him.

It just keeps me going to see all that negative energy in my mind. I said I'll never do that Ill never ever ever do that to my children or to my niece and nephew or my grandchildren or parents or grandparents all the stuff I seen negative. I said I'll never do that kind of stuff or let my wife and my children see that kind of world (B).

The positive thing, I just . love it ever since we got our drums, my wife, we first received our drums. The first song that came out I was really shy to even sing loud because I was scared someone would laugh at me, then when I did actually sing really loud and it came out, the energy, like the drum made me more powerful in a positive way, not in a medicine man way or a transformer people way, just by the love, care, truth, trust, that's what is coming out in my heart, and that is what the people feel (B).

One student talks about how love and caring can help the ones you love through traumatic experiences.

I never went to that school, but I feel all the pain that those guys went through. My wife went through that and she always says that she is really proud that she met me and I kept her on the positive world, and I feel good, even though I didn't marry her to do that. That's what I told her, "I didn't marry you to counsel you , I married you because I loved you." By caring love and caring, that's all it is (B).

Transforming Negative Life Styles

Some of the students have conquered addictions, such as alcohol, or diseases, such as diabetes, by finding the strength to change certain aspects of their lives. They tell their stories and how they made the changes to help others who are suffering.

... with the alcoholism, seeing it with my parents, my grandparents, in my mind I kept on thinking I don't want this, I don't want this for my children, or anybody else to see this kind of life.... so seeing that kind of world ...that's why when I quit. People ask me how many years ago

did you quit and how many days. I don't know. I quit. It doesn't matter to me any more, it's gone. It's not part of my life anymore...and they say hey, that's a good way to look at it. Because if you are doing it for yourself, that's what counts.. If you are doing it for someone else, then you are going to blame them and say you made me do this, so I'm going to start again like that. Or the wagon, I'm on the wagon. I got off the wagon and they said. "Oh. you started drinking?" No, I got off the wagon and I want to walk on my own two feet instead of depending on that wagon to bring me somewhere. That wagon might get a flat so I might have to go buy a flat. Yeah hey...a flat of booze or something like that, or have an excuse to fall off something. I'd have something to blame. But if I walk on my own two feet, then I got only me to trust. And if I trust in myself that much, then I should trust myself to say no I don't want that anymore for the rest of my life. And so I kept that. Cause coming to, I was holding a Johnny Walker scotch whiskey big bottle and drinking it like water, and holy man. Before when I first started drinking I used to get sick on just a sip, but those energies keep me going forward in a positive way (B).

I left the skids thirty years ago, why would I want to go back there now. That was my playground there for awhile. There was no way I wanted to go to that. I was never really an alcoholic. I drank, but I had enough responsibility that if I went during the week it was just a few beer in the evening. And playing for dances you couldn't really get drunk so I was more or less a social drinker, not a full fledged alki (H).

Traditional medicines were part of what one student used to get rid of his diabetes, along with a healthier diet and more positive outlook.

...stinging nettles need to be picked right now and the mint and the raspberry leaves and the red flowering currant. All these things got to be picked right now. To be put in tea, and I told them that's why I beat my diabetes because those are the things I needed that's what I went and did my family went and did it for me and made teas for me and now I don't have diabetes because I thought it away. I turned handicap ...I was a diabetic like whatever the doctors were saying I wasn't that sick or crippled or handicapped but I turned into that. The nurses in the workshops they showed me the sugar things that I ate, what I took for granted for meals everyday, and that was a kick again in my rear. Stop being a bonehead and just do the right thing. It's saying it right here what you have to do and just do it. So pop and chips are out the window and candy and all the sugary food, like white bread that is just nothing but air so I've been told... I buy the grain breads now and all these kind of things and deal with the real world. And the doctors are going like this, B... You don't have diabetes. And I'm going yahoo! (B).

One student is just starting to realize that he needs help to change something negative in his life. This awareness is an important first step for him.

I'm trying to seek someone I could trust to talk to about my problems because I just want this relationship to last. Even though we really kind of dog and cat fights, we still care.. In a way I feel sad because I made her feel bad (M).

Students Suggestions for Improving the Program

As students discussed some of the problems with the program, they also suggested what they would have needed to make it work more effectively. Several students talked about the importance of choosing candidates who are committed to learning the culture and history of the Lil'wat nation for the long term success of the program.

...if we had the right group, I think we would have been still going strong, you know, people with a positive attitude and a lot of energy, that's what we need (M).

You just have to have the right crew in there. When they are saying they want to learn, they should be doing the learning, instead of just signing the contract and just showing up, you know, 'cause if they really felt true in their heart, that's the real contract (B).

What I'd like to see is people come forward who are already into all of their cedar work, and stuff, carvings, and stuff like that, and painting, you know, people who want to do it rather than be forced into doing it. But then those ones who didn't do anything, I'm not saying that they didn't earn; they just didn't do anything (M4).

One participant, although he acknowledges that there needs to be a willing group, he also feels that it is a wider community problem that has to be tackled: one of working together.

With the right participants, it would be hard to hold a project like this back. You look at the Squamish Band. They got a building and they got

their carvers canoe carving and stuff, you know, and they work together and they accomplish these things. You look at Westbank, and what they've got...you look at Burrard, Musqueam; they work together, eh. They work together and they can accomplish it. Here (Mount Currie), there's conflict, and looking down, and family things, and it doesn't work (H).

One suggestion was to have a counselor throughout the program to help with group and individual difficulties, in addition to leader or instructor as outlined in the leadership section, to keep everyone on track. The same student suggests bringing in the daily drumming and singing, and a talking circle to discuss what is happening in the group.

(We needed) some counselor or something so the people could talk to them instead of yelling at each other and swearing all the time.

.. in the beginning of life skills, we always had a morning song, and afternoon song, and a sharing circle. In the morning and that's what we used to do and now we don't even. It should come back (C).

Another common suggestion was to have the necessary equipment to carry on the program, for example, a vehicle and tape recording equipment.

Vehicles to...help us get out there, that was the biggest thing we needed,...and the trucks, too, to be able to bring our materials back 'cause the local artists already got it picked because they are the ones who are able to walk to here (B).

I asked from the start get us a van so we can go.....transportation given the fact that within our immediate vicinity now there's so much private trespassing, the grounds that we used to go and gather, they're not available no more. We got to go farther a field and try to save those properties that are out there now. Where we used to go up here we can't go no more. You can't go hunt (points up the mountain behind the school). We used to go hunting up there....we can't go no more. There's a lot of mitigating factors,...but participation, transportation, that's it. They needed that nowadays to get to the gathering places (H).

Some suggestions for improvement concerned organizational issues such as what the participants do every day or how the learning was organized.

everyone should have something to do everyday not just sit here. And that it wasn't fair to everyone else to be working while you just sit there every day, day in and day out, did nothing
...if we had a list of things to do in one week and everyone had to do it. It would be easier if we were time limited on things (M4).

It would have nice if they had it all planned out already.... this person is coming in, that person is coming in. They (management) did that for awhile where they had people come in and we had to sit with them for awhile ...and it worked out ok that way
certain areas drew most interest. Mostly outdoor projects they (the students) liked the most, rather than being indoors (M4).

But then those ones who didn't do anything I'm not saying that they didn't learn, they just didn't do anything (M4).

Part of the organizational strategy could be more flexibility as far as the hours went, because, as one student suggests, 9 to 4 doesn't always work when you are trying to learn the culture.

We needed more openness and willingness, openness on the part of the participants as well as the time slots,. If we were going to go to Lillooet, we should be leaving here at 5 in the morning to get there on time, instead of come here at 9 and then we have to sign out at 4. Just too cardboard box for me. There's inboxes and outboxes, okay, this is what you go by, nothing else (H).

Some of the suggestions concerning content have already come out in under the program section heading. Some examples are a leader with more leadership and teaching skills, more focus on learning and practicing the Lil'wat language; setting up a permanent s7istken somewhere as a centre of learning in Mount Currie in the traditional way over a pit; more in-depth life skills, less life skills, or life skills as a screening device before the program starts. There were some content suggestions about important parts of culture and history that could be included.

Maybe we could just, two or three of us go and visit an elder, take a tape recorder. That's all they want, too. We could have learned to make a lot of things, like old fish traps, old fish nets out of roots.....(M).

What I wouldn't have minded seeing in there was our family tree thing done, or something. That would have been nice just to find out more information about our families (M4).

When asked "Should there be another Lil'wat Culture and History Program?", one student replied:

Give it another chance. With another chance it will take off.
I think you would have a lot to show for it (H).

Issues of trust came up in several of the categories, including students not trusting each other and not trusting management. Although lack of trust greatly affected the learning environment, students did not have any suggestion about how to change this dynamic.

Changes in the Lives of the students

The students had very different ideas about whether the program had changed them in any way, or brought about changes in their lives.

I know that people seen a change in me, too, you know. A lot of people say "Oh heck, you still in that program? You're looking good!".....keep on _____, you're doing good "Wow! First time people been saying that to me (M).

To me, I'm still the same person...I didn't change or anything. I might have opened up. That's the only thing I can say is that I might have opened up more, and now I've got thirteen more friends than I did when we were at the start (Y).

It lowered my self esteem. Like, I said before, I'm used to progress, production, participation in the workforce, eh. If you don't, things get undermined. That's what happened here (H).

It has settled me down quite a bit It gives me more to do out there now. Now that I've learned the cedar roots and now I get out more often now. I spend more time outdoors than I do in. I used to just lock myself up in the

house doing the cedar bark and that's all I'd do. And after learning, going through this program, I'm outside more, riding my bike more (M4).

Yeah, yeah, it changed me. Just the knowledge, speaking the language, respect, respecting of the elders,.....a little more knowledge, oh yeah, self-esteem (R).

Thoughts about the End of the Program

Me, I can hardly wait until it's finished. Then I get to go on holiday. I deserve it (C).

It's too bad they didn't extend it longer, 'cause doing that s7istken thing. That would be awesome to do (R).

Stories

Aboriginal people need a new story....Aboriginal people recognize that we are in between stories. We do not trust the old story of government paternalism, and we are trying to get a clearer picture of our new story. Ultimately, this new story is about empowering Aboriginal worldviews, languages, knowledge, cultures, and most important, Aboriginal peoples and communities. (Battiste, 2000, p.viii)

One traditional method of teaching is the story. The Lil'wat people divide stories into sptakwlh, which are teaching stories or legends, and sqweqwel, which are more recent stories of experiences (Williams and Wyatt, 1987). The Lil'wat have many stories of both types that have been handed down for generations. The listener is expected to actively listen to the stories, and respond with 'Ee-EYE' to show interest at various parts of the story (Kennedy and Bouchard, 1977). In the analysis of the transcripts, various aspects of story telling emerged. The students told sqweqwel stories of their own lives and experiences during the interview, and there is one possible sptakwlh about what happens when people in the community don't cooperate. One

student told stories about how racism affected his life, and how he internalized it and rejected his own culture:

When I was going to the Mount Currie Indian day school, they made me want to learn and be smart. The real shocker is that even though I was going to church and going to school, getting smart and learning about their ways and integrating to Signal Hill for grade six, ...I found out that I was the worst colour person in the world and the worst person to be around by the colour of my skin ...Because when I went to the white school where I found out that I was a Native and they hated my guts that much so that's what I came home with. I hated our people because the way they were hated. (B).

I lost a brother, too, to learn that I was a Native. He died up there on this hill. He tried to be a medicine man. ... when Istopped going to church when I found out that I didn't want to die to find out there was life, ... I ended up going to get drunk and finding alcohol, and that was my world. ..I ended up being an alcoholic....my brother, he was a drummer. I had a drum and he had his own drum, and he always sang. ... I was saying "Shut the fuck up", you know, I'd be really cussing. It would be coming out of my mouth. I'd be going like this (gestures banging on the wall), "I hate that music". I can still see myself saying that. That's one of those negative energies that keeps me going. I don't want to be that kind of a guy ever again and I don't want anybody to be like that ever to our way of life (B).

Another student tells the story of his residential school days that incorporates a traditional teaching about helping elders that he learned as he was growing up.

I went to residential school for 6 years. St Mary's. When I was there, I worked in the barn for about 5 ½, almost 6 years. When I was growing up, I wasn't allowed to see an older person packing wood. You go and do it, you go and pack it. When I got to Mission, I see this, to me, old white man working by himself, and I offered to go and help him. That's how I got started working in the barn. My first job. "Need any help?" "Yeah, come on." So I crawled through the fence and then that was my first day working in the barn (H).

The same student tells of his later educational experiences, and how music affected his schooling, and became part of his life. This story also

gives some insight into the difficulties of living in a fairly isolated community.

I played in the band, and because there was no road out of here we would have to catch a train. So if we were playing Friday night somewhere, we would have to catch the train out Thursday because if we caught it Friday night, it pulled in to Vancouver at 10 to 10 and it would be just too late to go anywhere. So invariably, I was missing Friday and sometimes Monday, depending on how far we went to play. If we missed the train Sunday, we had to wait for Monday morning to catch it....and I was missing two days a week. So they gave me an ultimatum. Eventually, I dropped out of high school twice because of music. I put in 21 years on the road playing (H).

The same student talks about how stories were a part of the gatherings that took place as he was growing up, and tells a story meant to encourage people to cooperate and help the community.

...people gathering just to have a good time, you know, brass band and the Indian dancers, and somebody would tell stories, they'd all sit and eat together, you know. Maybe it was somebody's birthday and they'd call for a gathering. I seen quite a bit of it as I was growing up (H).

There's no time for mollycoddling yourself. You have to whip yourself to get out there and do it, otherwise you went hungry. At one time, they banished the ones who didn't want to participate. If one didn't want to help then nobody wanted to help him. You go live over there by yourself, cut your own wood, catch your own fish. Get your own meat. If you don't want to help us, you go help yourself. Invariably they smartened up and came back. The two stories I heard they became productive members of the community after being given the rude awakening, reality (H).

One student shared his stories and his historical knowledge of the area with the students in the program, but he became discouraged when they felt they hadn't learned anything.

I brought them out there I'd tell them about where I was born and where I seen a Sasquatch , and all the things that I did when I was on that side of the valley.....the history part of my life anyways, like where they held horse races and the old rodeo grounds, the old churches, all these things that they learned from me, but like I was saying, they came around and said "I didn't learn anything." You know, what, I just showed you my life. I just showed you my life out there just today, you know, and you didn't learn nothing? But then I didn't make fun of it (B).

Some of the stories were connected to traditional knowledge of the plants or how people used to live. In the following stories, one student talks about the time he gave someone a "poisonous" plant, and another tells about traditional housing in the Lil'wat area

I had a friend from Vancouver who brought her nephew with her one time, and I brought them out into the woods there. I told them, "You guys park here because I'm not going to show you where I pick." I went out there and I brought out a packsack full of hakwa7, and I peeled it for that guy. His auntie knew how to do it already, so she was munching out. That guy was munching down on his and I said, "Yeah, in the books it says that these are poisonous." And that guy started freaking out. He thought he was going to die right now just by me saying poisonous, and I told him, "See, you are already going to die then. I been eating this all my life and I'm still alive, so how can it be poisonous?" So he came out of there with a good attitude about this food. How can you find out if it is poisonous if you don't find out, you know, try it out (B).

With the s7istkens, they would go with the seasons. For the spring, and they would stay in that area until summer, then move to another one, then fall, then winter. See, if it was winter then they would be hunting, and summer and spring they would be fishing. They also had smaller ones, to provide food, underground. It's long before we had fridges, and houses (while she is talking, she is drawing pictures of a teepee and an s7istken) (C).

One student told a story of how he blended the old and the new and used the remnants of a modern convenience to enhance a traditional skill, that of smoking fish.

I built myself a smoker too. It was my own idea. I just got bored, so I was just trying to think of something. Next thing you know, people are saying, "What are you doing with that". It's the inside of a dryer, see, that's going to be my little stove. Then I found a box. It was already made, so I just made a couple of holes in it and I put the racks inside and opened it up and pushed the racks in. Then, I cut a hole in the bottom for the dryer thing. And the smoke goes up, perfect. I'm really proud of that one. I tried chicken in there, and it tastes good. It took a while to cook, but it was tasty. I was using apple and cherry wood, the dust, sawdust. A couple of times I cooked it (the salmon) instead of smoking it. I had the heat so far up. It tastes so good. I had the brown sugar, garlic flavour, about 4 or 5 different flavours because I could fit about 30 or 40 salmon in my thing (smoker)(M).

One student who dropped out early in the program had been sharing stories of his war time experiences, and the other students appreciated this.

....he was in the army thing, so he told us some of his stories what he did....flying planes and stuff....air force. Yeah, that was good some of them, that was good to see, like _____, he told about his air force things (R).

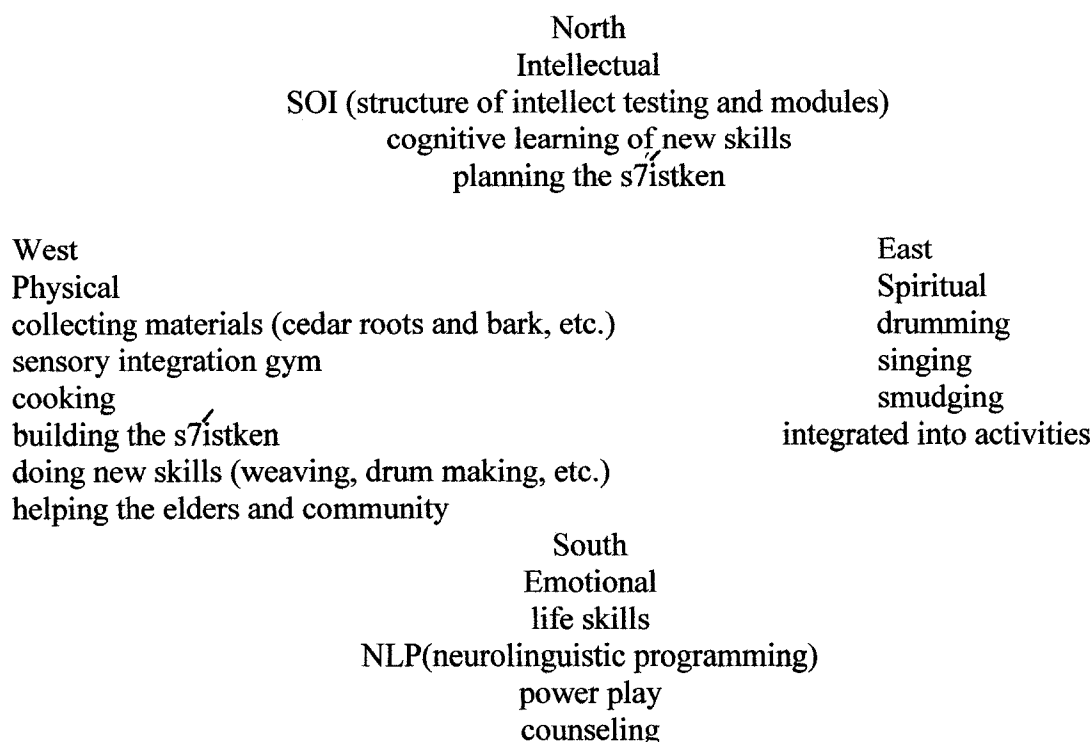
CHAPTER SEVEN DISCUSSION

First Nations Theories

The medicine wheel, with its many variations but consistent holistic model encompassing the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional aspects of life, has been used extensively by educators, both Native and non-Native, to describe the philosophy and structure of educational programs that meet the needs of Native students (Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000a)(Hodgson-Smith, 2000)(Calliou, 1995)(Dyck, 1998). Lillian Dyck, in “An analysis of Western, feminist and Aboriginal science using the medicine wheel of the Plains Indians”, describes her view of the medicine wheel.

The concepts embraced by the medicine wheel are an integral part of Plains cultures. It can be used to understand ideas, to show how all things are living and interconnected. Everything is considered to have four aspects: spiritual, emotional, physical and mental... a person is considered to be in balance or in harmony when each of these four aspects is equally developed (p.91).

Most educational theories using the medicine wheel philosophy follow this pattern. There are some variations, for example, Hampton (1995) in “Towards a redefinition of Indian education” describes his six directional circle as not a model, but “a way of thinking about existing in the universe” (p 16). There are also variations of which aspect to assign to each direction, but a common one used by Sharilyn Calliou (1995) shows intellectual (cognitive and thoughts) in the north, spiritual in the east, emotional in the south, and physical in the west. When applying the more common four directional model to the Lil’wat Culture and History Program, it can be seen as a relatively balanced or holistic program with something for each aspect of human growth and development: spiritual, emotional, physical and mental.



The sections of the program can be placed on the medicine wheel which, although it is part of the prairie culture, also represents the holism that is present in many First Nations cultures including the Lil'wat. At Ts'zil Learning Centre, we try to offer our programs with the medicine wheel model in mind, incorporating something for the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical realms. We are far more successful at valuing the emotional and intellectual aspects, and have long realized that our upgrading, business, and university transfer courses need more content that is addressed to the spiritual and physical realms. The Lil'wat Culture and History program was more successful than our other Ts'zil programs in addressing the spiritual and physical. As described earlier, the four directions are an important part of the Lil'wat worldview, and

the medicine wheel model shows that all of the aspects were considered in the development of the Lil'wat Culture and History program.

In the intellectual realm, the Structure of Intellect test looks at 27 different cognitive functions that underlie learning, and the modules are used to improve the functions that scored low on the test. As well, there are cognitive aspects to learning any new skill.

The physical part of the program included the gym where the students play ball, balance on balance and rotation boards, jump on the mini-trampoline, throw balls through a hoop, and throw balls to each other in different pattern while balancing. The physical realm also includes the physical work involved in building an s7istken, such as moving boards, hammering; collecting materials which included digging for cedar roots, chopping and peeling inner cedar bark from the trees, peeling and splitting the roots, and picking the medicines; and doing the physical practice required to learn to weave roots, make a drum, paint a paddle, etc.

The emotional realm includes life skills, where students were to learn to work together, become enthusiastic about their learning, and deal with some of the issues that were bothering them. The neurolinguistic programming and counseling were set up to deal with students' issues on an in-depth individual basis. The forum theatre workshop was another group activity that focused on wider community issues that affected each student, such as alcoholism and family violence. Although it could be in the physical because of the movement involved in putting on a play, or in the intellectual because the play was created by the students, the subject matter and the fact that the students created the play from their own issues moved forum theatre to the emotional realm.

The spiritual realm is harder to analyze because spirituality was woven into all aspects of daily living and learning in traditional societies.

In traditional Indian culture, the sacred was not separate from the secular, as it is in non-Indian society. Thus, education among Indians did not separate the search for knowledge from sacred learning or religious training....It follows that sacred knowledge could not be separated from the knowledge needed for daily living (McCaskill 1987, p.164).

I have put the drumming and singing into the spiritual category, but there are also spiritual aspects to gathering and working with traditional materials and food, for example, leaving an offering when you pick something, taking care not to pick too much in one place out of respect for the plants or trees, and saying thanks to the materials you are using for making themselves available. The Culture and History group occasionally burned sage or sweetgrass in a smudge or cleansing ritual during class time, and this is also placed in the spiritual category. When the s7istken was being built, the students sang songs and said prayers when they started and when they finished each day. They also sang, drummed and prayed during life skills and when participating in community activities. There are also spiritual aspects to helping the elders, and participating with them in prayers and ceremonies.

Each aspect of the medicine wheel in the program offered students the opportunity to develop. Students took advantage of the opportunities in varying degrees, often grasping one or two aspects and rejecting the others. The aspect most rejected was the emotional aspect, and as the students have said, some people were not ready to look at themselves in a deep way.

Transformational Theory

How was the program transformative according to Mezirow's theory? As stated earlier, for a change to be considered transformative, a student must reflect on his or her basic assumptions because of new information, and find that these old assumptions are not valid for his or her life. As a result, the student changes the basic assumption and because of that, behaves in a different way. The most obvious transformations that the students talked about happened outside of the program, but were life changing. For example, B tells of his strong belief in the Catholic religion when he was young. His belief was that God created all people and everyone was the same. As he went through school, moving from the all-Native school in Mount Currie to the mixed, but mostly non-Native school in Pemberton, he discovered that he was not the same as the others, and in fact, he was considered inferior. He belonged to what he saw as a hated people. This was a great upheaval in his assumptions about himself, and his people. He clung to his religion, and internalized the belief that if God created these people (Indians) as inferiors, then there was something wrong with them, not with the dominant society! He turned his anger towards his own people and his own culture. The behavioral change for him at that time was to violently reject his own culture, and turn to drugs and alcohol. This change has all the aspects of transformation, although it made B's life very difficult. Then slowly, beginning with a road block experience where he saw the elders' rights being taken away, and pushed along by the death of his brother, B began to see the value in his culture. He reflected on his religious beliefs, and his dependence on alcohol, and found they were no longer meaningful, and moved towards embracing his culture and traditional spirituality. Today, Lil'wat culture and spirituality are important aspects of his

life. Again, he reflected on something he believed very deeply, and changed his belief as well as changing how he lived his life. In these two transformations in his life, B followed the steps that Mezirow (1991) outlines:

First transformation was from belief that God created everyone to be equal, and all people and cultures have value, to feeling that his own culture and people were inferior. The 'disorienting dilemma' that caused B to examine his beliefs was the racist treatment he received when he transferred to the school in Pemberton. He realized that there were other races, and decided that, based on what happened to him, they were not created equal and there was something wrong with his own people.

Because when I went to the white school where I found out that I was a Native and they hated my guts so much so that's what I came home with. I hated our people because the way they were hated. How come God hates these, made these people hate these kind of people. Is there something wrong with these kind of people? (B).

At this point, there was a disjuncture between past roles and new understandings resulting from reflection and reappraisal of past assumptions. Then, he moved back and forth between living as though Indians were equal, and living as though something was wrong with them, until he adopted the new way of living completely and turned against himself, his culture and his race. Alcoholism and anger towards those who practiced the culture was his new way of living. Mezirow talks about transformation as a move towards more positive beliefs, but in B's first change, he moved towards a negative way of living and believing that hurt him and his family. In the second change, or transformation, B's 'disorienting dilemma' came as two separate incidents in his life. The first one concerned an incident where the elders were being dishonoured.

In 1975, when they, the DFO, came in and they tried to destroy our elders and that was down at the fishing camp They say that

we had no fishing rights. and that's when I stood up and roadblocked then, and that was the start of my energy of being a First Nations person (B).

The second part of the 'disorienting dilemma' was the death of his brother whom he had hollered and sworn at for practicing the cultural ways. He began to examine the things he believed and the way he was living. He then decided to make some changes based on his new assumptions that the cultural ways and the First Nations people, including himself, were valuable. The actions he took to change based on the new assumptions were to quit drinking and to embrace the cultural ways.

B also undergoes transformation after he is told that he has diabetes. He feels that he became handicapped for a short time because of that diagnosis, but then with the help of nurses and his family, he examines and changes his eating habits. A turning point was a workshop where the nurses showed him just how much sugar was in his present diet and what the effects of that could be for his health. He calls this a 'kick in the rear', which could be another name for a 'disorienting dilemma'.

M had some significant experiences that could be classed as transformational while he was in the Lil'wat Culture and History program. One very dramatic change happened for M during the drum making. After he was taught in class how to make a frame, he got very excited about making drums and went out into the community on his own and found people who could teach him how to work with hides and cover his drum. He then proceeded to make several drums to increase his skill. He was extremely proud of himself when he was asked to join one of the respected drum makers to help teach drum making to the high school students at the Band operated school. M expressed how good he felt, not only because of his new drum making ability, but because he

discovered that he could teach young people, particularly the young men, and they would listen to him.

M attempted a lifestyle change when he quit drinking for over a month and got support from his fellow students, but it is not clear from the data what the 'disorienting dilemma' was that initiated this change. M is also in the process of transformation because of problems in his relationship. His 'disorienting dilemma' is the constant fighting with his partner and how the fighting makes him feel sad. He wants to change the dynamics of the relationship so that it can continue, and he is in the process of finding some help to do that. Just the recognition that the fighting is a problem for him is a big step towards a possible transformation. M also states that he has noticed a change in the way people view him. For the first time, people are saying he is looking good and they are telling him to keep on doing what he is doing. This is transformational because it has changed the way he looks at himself. He says with a big smile "Wow! First time people been saying that to me."

M4 describes a change for her over the course of the program. She had been a stay at home person, and she didn't like to go out of her house. Through coming out each day to attend the program and through participating in community activities, she feels better about being out, and her interest in the cedar roots and bark takes her into the forest as well. She states that now "I spend more time outdoors than I do in". She also states that the program "settled her down a bit", but she doesn't go into detail about that change.

For C, the changes were very subtle. She tended to give up easily when M4 was showing her how to do something, but then M4 brought her young daughter into the

class. The child showed patience and determination to learn new things, and C began to put more effort into learning because of her example.

B tells of one student who thought she was allergic to fish. She began to work with him cutting fish, and when she really put her mind to it and set aside her fear of being allergic, she started cutting and didn't want to stop! This was transformative because when she examined her previously held assumption that she was allergic to fish, the assumption was found to be faulty. She changed her thinking and changed her behaviour.

One student, Y, doesn't think that any changes occurred for her. At first, Y says "I didn't change or anything" but then, she says "I might have opened up more". In another statement "I've got thirteen more friends than I did when we were at the start", Y does show willingness to take old relationships to a new level because although all of the participants knew each other at the start, most of them were not friends.

Only one student, H, sees negative changes in himself because of the program. He felt that he was knowledgeable about the culture and the language, and that he could share this knowledge with the other students as their supervisor. His 'disorienting dilemma' came when he realized that most of the students would not accept his information. He feels he wasn't listened to or respected as the supervisor, and his knowledge wasn't valued. Because of that, the program overall lowered his self-esteem and made him unsure of his ability as a leader.

One very important change was that fourteen of the original students did participate throughout the whole fourteen months of the program, even though they had not participated in other employment related and educational opportunities offered by the

Lil'wat Employment Centre. This is a significant change which may qualify as transformational because it resulted in behavioral change. The premise that 'participation in programs offered by the Band was of no benefit to the individual' may have been found to be faulty; therefore, the students changed the premise and did actively participate and benefit from the experience.

The program itself underwent a change, which, although it could not be classified as transformational in Mezirow's definition, was very significant. In the beginning the students worked as a group and had a leader (the life skills coach). They had a morning song and afternoon song, and some rituals such as burning sweetgrass or sage that they all did together. The group participated in activities together; for example, they built the s7istken in Whistler, and went on a field trip to Victoria. They began working with the elders and making gifts for the elders. As time went on, the group began to unravel. The participants began to do their own work and not participate in group events. They stopped having the morning song, although one student carried it on for the rest of the program, and the smudge. Only a few people participated in the elders gatherings. Each participant found a skill or activity he or she was interested in and did that during the class time. Sometimes small groups of students would do something together, such as practicing the language or listening to a visiting elder or classmate who was sharing stories and knowledge. M focused on drum making, M4 and R on the cedar bark work, H on catching, cooking and preserving salmon, and B on collecting teas and medicines. Y and C tried many skills such as drawing pictures, making bracelets, carving, etc., without focusing on one in particular. The Lil'wat Culture and History group changed from having the whole group participating in the same activities and knowledge gathering, to

having the focus on students learning individually or in small groups. This was a major change and many difficulties arose because some students and the supervisor still tried to get people to work together, and felt discouraged when they didn't. This change in the program also marks the Lil'wat Culture and History program as a site of resistance as defined by the critical theorists. Not only are the participants resisting the imposed knowledge of the dominant society by learning their own traditional ways, they are resisting the imposed 'group' centered activities that were originally part of the program by shifting to 'individual' activities.

The program did have the potential to create more transformational change than it did for the students. I feel that part of the reason this did not happen is that, after the life skills ended, the students had no structured vehicle to discuss what they were learning and what they were feeling. Some of the events, such as the completion of the s7istken when people cried because the sense of pride and accomplishment was so great, could have been transformational, but in order for transformation to occur, the students would have to be able to articulate their new feelings about themselves, and challenge their previous assumptions. A possible previous assumption in this case might have been that they couldn't do something as complicated as planning and building an s7istken. After they accomplished this, they would have new information about their abilities, and would plan new behaviors based on the new assumptions. These further steps were not accommodated within the program, and they could have been, either with a talking circle, a facilitator, or learning journals. Something else along these lines was needed to take the learning deeper and make it more meaningful in order to facilitate transformation.

Transformation, however, was not the goal of the program. The changes that people did make were significant for them, and the increased self-esteem and participation in activities fit with the goals of the program. Trying to make the Lil'wat Culture and History program conform to Mezirow's theory does the program and its participants a disservice and devalues the meaningful changes that did take place.

Further Analysis

The Lil'wat Culture and History Program was a pilot project, a test of what could be done by a group who got together to learn and share knowledge about traditional Lil'wat culture and history. This group was encouraged to participate and to increase the skills they already had. The students also had the opportunity to work on their own issues. The program was set up to meet the different needs of the students with parts of the program to cover all of the aspects of personal development: physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional. The program also embodied many of the principles of effective First Nations education, and served as a site of resistance to the cultural domination of the mainstream society by valuing the traditional knowledge. The goals of the program were to reach the people on social assistance in the Mount Currie community who had not taken part in previous education or employment opportunities, to build their self-esteem, to have them participate in community activities. It was important to the staff of the Lil'wat Employment Centre to utilize and enhance the skills that this group of people had, which was their traditional skills and knowledge. The program was very successful at meeting these goals. For fourteen months these students were in the classroom learning skills or practicing what they already knew, and at least once a week they were out in the community interacting with others, especially the elders. The

students describe learning many skills (instrumental learning) in the four chosen areas: s7istken, Lil'wat language, food preservation, and cedar bark and root work, and as well, learned how to make drums. They also participated to varying degrees in life skills and other emotional development areas of the program, and many say they increased their self-esteem. All of the research participants stated that they would like to do the program again.

Could they have learned more? In their own words, the students could have put more effort into the learning. The students give many reasons for what they saw as a 'lack of effort' on the part of others and themselves. One reason that came through the data strongly was that they felt 'abandoned'. They felt that no one cared what or if they were learning.

In the beginning, in life skills, there was some structure to the day and the instructor was there to facilitate the learning. The comments about this time are positive. Students talk about looking forward to the day and being motivated at this time. Then, in life skills to some extent, and the other emotional programs such as the forum theatre and counseling, issues that some of the students had been ignoring for years came to the surface, and many negative emotions were released. The comments about this time are of students crying and swearing, and people coming up with excuses not to do things, not trusting each other, and feeling sorry for themselves. The life skills coach left (end of that portion of the program), and there was no one there on a consistent basis to help release the tension and bring back the positive feelings. The students began to learn the traditional skills, and there were many positive things happening, but it seems from the data that the negative feelings and mistrust were causing friction among the students,

between the students and their supervisor, and between the students and the management of the program. Some students dropped out or were asked to leave.

It seems that the students who remained slowly began to isolate themselves from each other, and each one did his or her own thing and didn't participate in group activities. Those who came up with ideas and tried to get the group to get interested were discouraged with negative comments and what they saw as apathy. Learning was still going on, but it was on an individual basis, not as a group. The supervisor states that he got very discouraged and gave up trying to teach the language or the other skills he knows, except to one or two students who showed interest. When people such as elders came in to teach a particular skill, only certain students showed interest. There were some good times and laughter, but there were also arguments and dirty looks that made people feel uncomfortable in the class. Students started to report on each other to the office, and to cross out names of people who signed in to the classroom. There was a great deal of mistrust and students speak of 'spies' in the classroom. The program basically carried on this way until the end. Learning and participation in community activities still took place in spite of the problems that arose.

This program was made of people who did not participate in other programs that had been offered, and in this program, they were grouped together and expected to get along in spite of long standing personal and family trust issues. They did very well considering the situation. When the group based activities didn't develop, the students found traditional activities and knowledge to learn and practice on their own, or with one or two others. The seven who were interviewed, along with seven others who were not part of the study, stayed in the program until the end.

Was there anything that could have helped the group maintain the cohesiveness and energy the students felt at the beginning of the program? The views about this are widely disparate. Some students feel that the emotional aspect of the program should not have happened, while others feel it should have, but with more support to dissipate the negativity. Still others feel that the emotional support aspect should have been increased in either length or intensity to help deal with the emerging issues. As a researcher, I noticed a great sense of unburdening as students talked about what happened in the program. Each participant seemed to work out his or her own solutions as he or she talked about the program and how it seemed to fall apart. Would the program have been more effective if they had had the chance to have regular discussions with each other and the management, possibly in the form of a weekly talking circle? One of the students talked about how successful this was when they did it in life skills, where they had a talking circle, and morning and an afternoon song as well to bring in the spiritual aspect of learning and help the students feel a part of something important.

I noticed, as well, that some of the students did not seem to realize the urgency and the importance of what they were doing. Many of them did not realize that the struggle of the Lil'wat to preserve their traditional knowledge is important for the survival of the Lil'wat Nation, as it is with Indigenous nations all over the world. Perhaps more information about the importance of preserving culture and language, encouragement that what they were doing was essential for their community, and contact, possibly through the internet, with other Indigenous people around the world who were trying to preserve their culture, would have heightened their interest and kept their energy and enthusiasm high.

Along with the underlying issues of abandonment, mistrust, and the timing and amount of emotional support such as life skills and counseling, some more practical issues also came to the forefront in the data. One of these was the time structure of the program, where students had to sign in at 9 and sign out at 4. Students felt that the lack of flexibility in this aspect of the program hampered their efforts to participate in traditional activities and gather the necessary materials. This is also tied in to the trust issue, because some students felt that management and other students didn't trust them enough to be out in the community or the forest or the fish camp doing program activities, rather than sitting in the classroom.

Another issue was lack of equipment and transportation to gather and work with traditional material. Lack of tools to build the pit house, and the need for a tape recorder or video camera to document elders' stories were brought up. Students talked about the need to have reliable transportation to gather materials, because most of the traditional materials close to the community have been depleted or destroyed by development.

Another important issue that came up often was the lack of effective leadership within the group. Every student mentioned this, and the supervisor himself was very unhappy with the position and how students and management responded to him. Again, this ties in with the trust issues, because some of the students didn't trust another student to be their leader. There were many lesser issues in the data, but these were the ones that had the most affect on the harmony and 'success' of the program.

Recommendation Process

Rather than making the recommendations that are usually made in a thesis of this type, I am suggesting a process where the recommendations could be made by the people

who are closely involved with the Lil'wat Culture and History Program: the students, the Band staff who created and administered the program, the elders and teachers who participated, and possibly even the community members who were touched by the program in some way. Dr. Eber Hampton has a story that illustrates the necessity of considering many aspects of a problem when you are trying to solve it. Once, when an elder asked him to carry a box, Dr. Hampton proudly and willingly agreed. He was puzzled, however, when the elder handed him what seemed to be an empty box.

His (the elder's) question came from behind the box," How many sides
Do you see?"

"One," I said.

He pulled the box towards his chest and turned it so one corner faced me.

"Now how many do you see?"

"Now I see three sides."

He stepped back and extended the box, one corner towards him and one towards me. "You and I together can see six sides of this box," he told me (Hampton, 1995, 42).

If, as a researcher, I made recommendations, I would be making them from the position of seeing one or two sides of the box. If all of those who have an interest in teaching and learning traditional knowledge in the Mount Currie community got together to discuss the issues that came up during the program, the group would have the opportunity to see the six sides of the box. Using these multiple perspectives, this evaluation group could come up with recommendations for the next program that would be relevant to the Mount Currie community and bring in the Lil'wat world view.

As to how the group would work best or what issues they would see as needing to be addressed, that would be up to the evaluation group to decide. I see issues of conflict and mistrust among students, between students and management, and between the families of students in the group. When and how to offer emotional support in the form

of life skills or counseling also emerged as an issue. In my opinion, keeping the students motivated and enthusiastic is an issue, along with providing the required materials, transportation, flexibility and recognition. The evaluation group may see different issues and come up with effective solutions.

There are many ways that the evaluation group could express their ideas, and the structure of the process would be up to the group, but I would suggest that a face-to-face, gentle, oral component such as a talking circle would be a reassuring start before they tackle the problem solving. In a talking circle, each person has the opportunity to speak without being interrupted, and when the person is finished, he or she passes a feather, rock, talking stick or other symbolic object to the next person. The Lil'wat Culture and History group used this process effectively during their Life Skills component.

The Mount Currie people have demonstrated that they have an effective problem solving process. I observed this process first-hand at a community meeting held in September 2003. Earlier that year, a young man from Mount Currie had been brutally murdered, allegedly by two other Band members. Drugs and alcohol were involved. The community was devastated, and the Band council wanted to get some ideas from the people about how to address issues of violence, drugs and alcohol so that this type of incident would not happen again. I attended the second meeting that was set up to elicit ideas from the community. There were about 200 people in attendance. After prayers and a dinner, everyone was given a number from one to seven. The seven main issues that had been decided on at the first meeting were posted on flip chart paper in seven different spots in the gym. Each spot had a group of chairs and a facilitator who was a Band member or employee, and a number from 1 to 7. To begin, all those who had 1

went to the spot for issue #1, and so on. For 30 minutes, each group discussed the issue before them and the facilitator wrote down the ideas. Then, every group moved to the next issue and repeated the process until the groups had discussed all of the seven issues. Finally, there was a large group discussion which carried on until everyone who wanted to speak about the issues or the process had had that opportunity. All of the data from this meeting was sorted into categories presented at a future meeting. After several similar meetings, the Lil'wat Community Wellness Plan was developed using the gathered data. This plan is now used to assist in the development of programs in the community. I know that the participants in the evaluation group for the Lil'wat Culture and History program could develop a similarly effective plan to discuss and create recommendations for how to address the issues raised by the students. When I discussed the issues of an evaluation group with Martina Pierre in December, 2004, she suggested that this evaluation group could be an important part of a community group looking at the larger issue of how to preserve Lil'wat culture, heritage, and language.

Thoughts about the Research Process

I have learned that the way I conducted my research did not have the result I hoped for of empowering the participants and having them take a meaningful, active role in making decisions about the research and participating in it. If I had started do my research when the Lil'wat Culture and History program began, then both the program and the research could have developed hand in hand. As the program evolved, participatory research with the students could have documented the evolution and served as a formative evaluation tool to assess the program. Students could have reflected on the research data to make informed decisions about how to proceed with the program. I feel

that this would have been a more beneficial and empowering process for everyone concerned. I thought that it would be enough just to meet with the participants as a group before and after the interviews to see if any changes needed to be made in their transcriptions or if they wanted to add further information. I did not meet with the students after I had completed the analysis to get their input, which would have been particularly valuable. I see now that not involving the students in reflection on the analysis blocked some very valuable information that could have been part of the study. I was just paying lip service to empowerment.

A research process where the students were more involved could have promoted transformation. The research process as I conducted it uncovered but did not encourage transformation because the students were not researching what was happening and making changes so that the program would be more meaningful for them. The research process analyzed the program but did not provide a vehicle to address any of the issues such as the cohesiveness of the group. Through a participatory research process, the students would be more aware of what was working and what wasn't in the program through discussion and documentation. They would then have the opportunity to change what was not working.

There were some extremely meaningful, emotional moments, for example, when the s7istken was finished in Whistler and all the participants felt a sense of pride and togetherness that was so overwhelming that several of them cried. Once, when the students were honoured at a community dinner, they got a chance to say what the program meant to them. This was also an uplifting, emotional time. However, both of these occasions were in the first six months of the program, and as time went on, the

students seemed to drift apart and let other issues such as family squabbles keep them from finding solidarity and moving forward as a group. I don't know if a meaningful, empowering research process that paralleled the program would have brought the group together or solved some of the existing problems. I do believe, however, that meeting frequently with a research helper, and possibly with management, to discuss and document the progress of the program and plan where to go next would have encouraged that students and made them feel as if others did care. As participatory researchers helping to document their own program, the students could take pictures, document the learning, and write their thoughts and plans in research journals. The participatory research process during the program might have had a positive influence on the motivation, attendance and togetherness of the group. As a researcher, I know that the type of research outlined with the students as active research participants would have empowered the students and been more meaningful to me as well.

Areas for Future Research

Specific to this study, I think it would be very informative to meet with the participants of the Lil'wat Culture and History program in 1 or 2 years to see if they have any further thoughts about how participation in the program has affected them in the long term. I would also like get their opinion of the evaluation process if it happens, and to get their assessment of the completed study.

One of the main areas for future research is how to effectively train and encourage, members of First Nations communities to fully participate in researching community issues, particularly those concerning traditional knowledge and history. One research questions could be how can we provide opportunities for Mount Currie

community members to conduct their own research. From children in school to adults taking post-secondary education in Mount Currie, projects could be developed at every level to introduce the concepts of research and documentation of community history, stories, traditions, rituals, territory and beliefs. Each Lil'wat student or community member could become a research participant in his or her own right, using his or her own family and stories as a starting point for research. The results could be gathered and shared at traditional feasts or community meetings, then kept at the Ts'zil Learning Centre library or cultural centre for future reference. At the moment in Mount Currie, people from the 'outside' are often hired to come in and do video work and other types of documentation for multimedia presentations about fishing methods and traditional medicines. Lil'wat people do some of the work now, but they could be trained to take over more of this process. This could also lead to a deeper investigation and documentation of each aspect of traditional knowledge and history in Mount Currie.

Another area of future research could be comparisons between what the Lil'wat people are doing to preserve their language and culture, and what other Indigenous communities world wide are doing. Sharing this information and documenting it could be a useful process for everyone concerned.

There is a possibility of doing more research into the traditional ways of transmitting knowledge in Mount Currie, and how that changed when non-Native people arrive in the area. This would include researching documents and interviewing elders.

Further research could also be done in the area of First Nations worldview and communications patterns and the compatibility of these with current non-First Nations education theories such as Meizrow's transformational theory. It seems that the mode of

communication in First Nations communities is more cooperative, and more physical, that is, showing rather than talking about something, and less adversarial than the conversation patterns of the dominant society. Is this true, and, if so, how does this affect whether current theories can be applied to First Nations learning? Perhaps only First Nations education theories are appropriate to analyze First Nations learning.

This brings up another possibility for future research: comparing recent Indigenous educational theories from around the world, or traditional knowledge and its method of transmission around the world. Extensive work is being done in the educational field by indigenous people in Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, and many other places around the globe, so there are many opportunities for comparative or other types of research. When thinking about future research, it is important to keep in mind that the Indigenous people need to be in control of the research. Non-Native researchers, such as myself, need to be investigating just what role they could play in Indigenous research through mentoring or being in the background.

Final Thoughts

Working on this thesis has been a learning journey for me, and it has been an honour to be allowed into the thoughts and feeling of the students, but the journey has not ended. In the next phase of the journey, which I hope will involve participatory research in the community, all of us will have a better understanding of what to take and what to leave behind, and of where we really want to go. I would like to be allowed to be a participant in the background as the teacher training students and others from Mount Currie who are completing higher education begin to take on the responsibility for researching and documenting Lil'wat issues, cultural knowledge, and history. There is

much to do, and I hope to be traveling this road with the people of Mount Currie for a long time.

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Appendix A

Research Explanation Letter for Thesis “Seeking Traditional Knowledge as a Transformational Experience”

Dear Interview Participant;

The Ethics Committee of the University of Northern British Columbia requires that all interview participants sign a consent form before an interview.

I am conducting research in Mount Currie for my graduate thesis focusing on effective First Nations adult education, and in particular, what internal and external changes happen for the learner as he or she learns. The research consists of one to two individual interviews with consenting students from the Cultural and History program. The life skills instructor, program director, and elders or visiting instructors will also be interviewed. There will be at least two group meetings with students to talk about the research and get students' ideas and one after the drafts of the interviews are complete, to review and get feedback.

Confidentiality will be respected at all times. All interviews will be taped and transcribed, and the tapes will be erased when the thesis is completed. Each participant will choose a pseudonym and will be referred to when necessary only by that pseudonym. The responses will be coded to identify the speaker by pseudonym and the list of actual participants and their pseudonyms will be kept in a private place and only seen by the writer. The responses will also be categorized and coded by topic so that it will not be necessary to use a name or the pseudonym (for example, for question 3, the responses will be sorted into categories such as employment, activities, lifestyle, etc., and, in the thesis, the results could state that several of the participants were unemployed before the course started, two were working in the tourist industry in Whistler, and one was a home care worker who looked after elders in Mount Currie. Neither names or pseudonyms would be used). Individual interviews will be held in a room where responses cannot be overheard. Each student, in a separate, individual meeting, will have the opportunity to review the transcript and add information or make changes if necessary.

In this thesis I would like to examine the Lil'wat Culture and History program, and look at what has changed in the minds and lives of the students as they participated in this class. I want to find how each student views the learning that has taken place for him or her, and what other changes they feel have occurred for them because of this program.

The benefit of this research is that the Lil'wat Culture and History program will be thoroughly documented and analyzed for what worked and what didn't, and the results could be used in the development of similar programs.

The risk is that the discussion and interviews could possibly bring up painful issues for the participants depending on what their prior experience with education is. In that case, there are available counseling resources and support groups in the community.

Copies of the thesis will be available in the Ts'zil Learning Centre Library, the Cultural Centre and the Mount Currie Band Office. Any further use of the information gathered will have to be approved by the Mount Currie Band Council. This research could be used to help make other programs more effective.

If you agree to participate in an interview or a focus group, you will be asked questions relevant to the thesis topic. Each participant from the Culture and History program will receive an honourarium of \$10 for each group or individual interview.

You have the right to refuse to answer any questions or to withdraw from the interview or focus group at any time without prejudice.

You have the freedom remain anonymous by using a pseudonym

Any complaints about this project can be directed to the Office of Research, University of Northern British Columbia,

Your interviewer will be Lynda Sampson, and I can be reached at _____ or by email _____ to answer any of your questions or talk about your concerns.

Yours truly,

Lynda Sampson
Capilano College Instructor, Ts'zil Learning Centre

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Do you understand that you have been asked to participate in a research study? Yes No

Have you read the information letter? Yes No

Do you understand that the research interviews will be recorded, and that the tapes will be erased after project completion? Yes No

Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in participation in this study? Yes No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? Yes No

Do you understand that you are free to refuse to answer any individual question, and that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason? Yes No

Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you? Yes No

Do you understand who will have access to the information you provide? Yes No

This study was explained to me by: Lynda Sampson

I agree to participate in this research project.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Printed Name

Printed Name

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix C: Letter stating that the Mount Currie Indian Band has the right to approve or disapprove any further publication of the research data.

March 1, 2004

Mount Currie Band Council
Road #10
Mount Currie, B.C.
V0N 2K0

Dear Members of the Mount Currie Band Council;

I have asked permission to do research and write up that research as part of my thesis requirement for my M.Ed degree at the University of Northern B.C. The completed and accepted thesis, Seeking Traditional Knowledge as a Transformational Experience, will be available at the University of Northern B.C. Library and at the Ts'zil Learning Centre Library in Mount Currie.

I agree that any further publication arising from this research will have to be approved by the Mount Currie Band Council.

If you need further information, I can be reached at Ts'zil Learning Centre
, or at home

Yours sincerely,

Lynda Sampson, Capilano College instructor
and student at the University of Northern British Columbia

Appendix D: Questions to Guide the Individual Interviews
For Thesis “Seeking Traditional Knowledge as a Transformational Experience”

The interviews will be very informal and the participants will be encouraged to talk about the program and their involvement with it. Only the questions that are not answered in this informal speaking will be asked directly. The interviews will be held in a private office with the door closed so that there is no possibility of being overheard. All interviews will be taped for transcription, and each participant will have the opportunity to go over his or her transcription before the information is written into the main thesis. All responses will be coded and participants will be identified with pseudonyms only.

- 1) How would you answer the question Who are you?
- 2) Can you tell me about your educational experience before you started the Lil’wat Culture and History program?
- 3) What were you doing before the program started?
- 4) Why did you decide to participate in the program?
- 5) What do you feel you learned from the life skills portion of the program?
- 6) What feelings and thoughts do you have about the life skills portion of the program? For example, did you enjoy the program? Why or why not?
- 7) Is there anything that you would like to have learned in the life skills portion that wasn’t included?
- 8) Is there anything that could have been done in a different way in the life skills program to be more effective for you?
- 9) Did what you learned in the life skills portion help you during the rest of the program or in you life in general?
- 10) What do you feel you learned from the Power Play portion of the program?
- 11) What feelings and thoughts do you have about the Power Play portion of the program?
- 12) What traditional knowledge and skills did you have before the Lil’wat Culture and History program started?
- 13) What traditional knowledge and skills did you learn in the program, and how did you learn these skills and knowledge?

- 14) What feelings and thoughts do you have about the portion of the program where you are learning traditional skills and knowledge and participating in community activities?
- 15) Did you learn everything you wanted to know in the traditional skills and knowledge portion of the program? Why or why not?
- 16) Is what you have and are learning in the Lil'wat Culture and History program helping you in other areas of your life? How?
- 17) Do you think that your participation in the program has changed the way you feel about yourself in any way? Explain.
- 18) Do you think that your participation in the Lil'wat Culture and History program has changed the way others feel about you, react to you or interact with you? Explain.
- 19) Has your participation in this group changed what you want to do with your life? Explain.
- 20) Are you the same person now as you were when you started the Lil'wat Culture and History program? Explain.
- 21) If this program were to be offered again, would you like to see any change in the way it was delivered? Explain.